

SEPTEMBER



# APOLLO

1955

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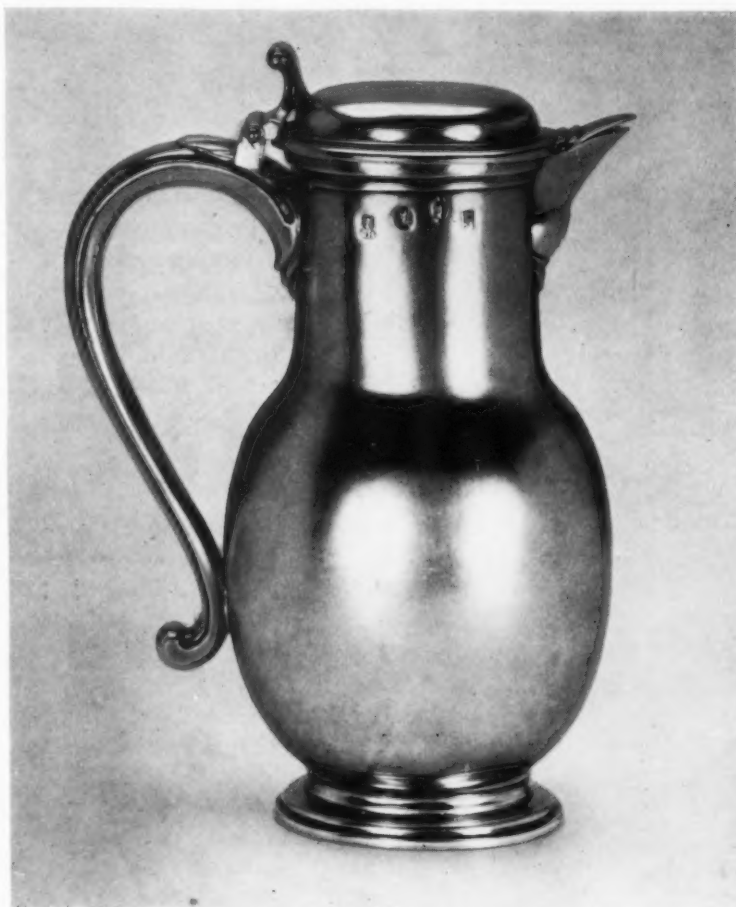
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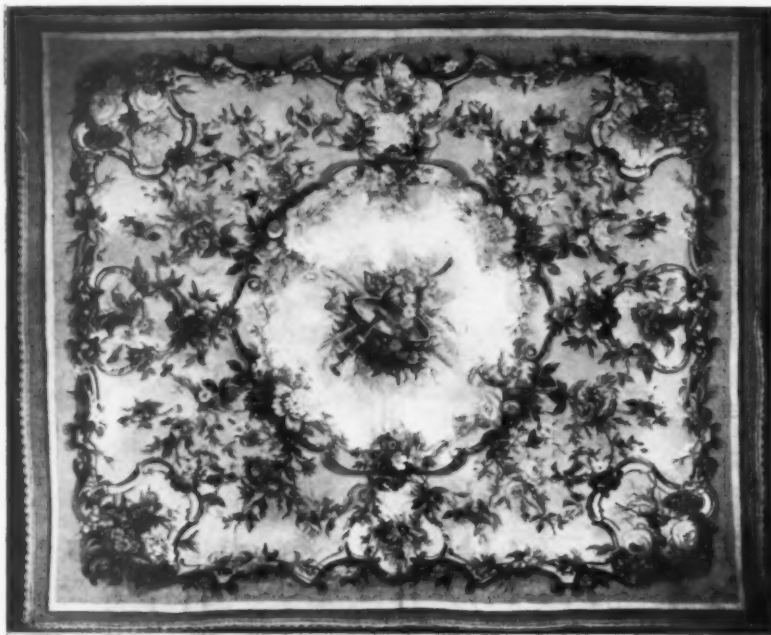
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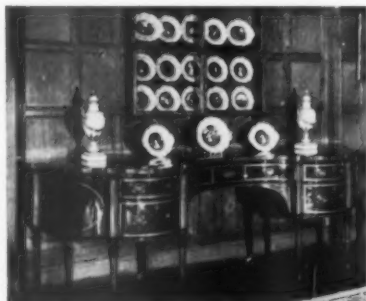
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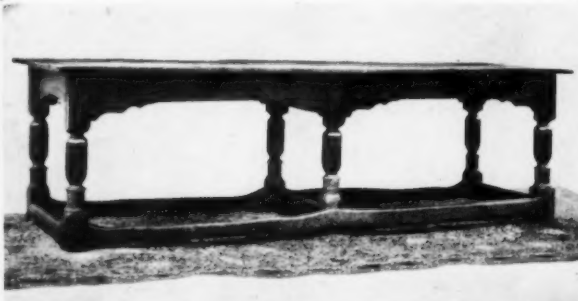
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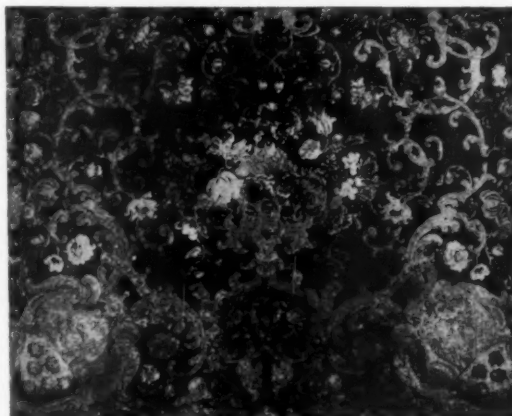
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# CURRENT SHOWS AND COMMENTS

"THE BEST IN THIS KIND ARE BUT SHADOWS"

BY PERSPEX



LA GRANDE BRIERE. By GINETTE RAPP.

From "Four French Realists" at the Tate Gallery.

PERSPEX's choice for the Picture of the Month

IN the austere and dignified setting of Whitechapel Art Gallery, surrounded by the extremely fine exhibition of works of Piet Mondriaan, the dual courtesy of Theseus seemed the appropriate word. Mondriaan's evolving vision, his craftsmanship, his intellectual quest for that universal quality in art which could supersede the transience of all representation of natural appearances, his sensitivity: all this adds up to a life-work as sincere as it is delightful. The showing at Whitechapel extends from portraits and landscapes which he did in his late twenties, to the absolute abstracts of more than forty years later. From unaffected naturalism, that is, through simplification, pattern-making, Cubism, and free abstraction, to a rigid organisation of linear design into squares and rectangles of pure colour which he believed to belong precisely to our age and its architecture, and equally to possess those qualities of absolute equilibrium and the ultimate. This art brings art to its ultimate logical conclusion along these lines of theorising; and certain of his own writings published in the catalogue state as clearly as it can be stated the aesthetic underlying his practice. If one might be allowed to use the outmoded methods of paradox once wielded by Chesterton it would be true to say that the ultimate logic about logical conclusions is that they are never ultimate and seldom logical. In less abstract terms, God and Mind and Nature have little to do with logic or conclusions. And in absolute fact Piet Mondriaan's consecrated and lifelong search for the universal absolute ends up with the linoleum on the bathroom floor. These dual series of parallel lines at rigid right-angles to each other, with two or three of the resultant squares or rectangles filled in with pure flat primary colour, achieve equilibrium. So does death; or would do had not God and Mind and Nature created the worm and the hereafter and the life-cycle. The mind reacts to this perfect equation with its everlasting

"So far, so good; so what?" And T. S. Eliot, for so long a nihilistic intellectual, comes back from his Waste Land with the reply: "In my end is my beginning." That is nature's reply, and there is every evidence that it is also that of art.

Mondriaan's abstraction is the best of its kind at whatever stage of his development one contacts it. This largely because its sensuous quality in the sheer craftsmanship of applying the paint yields ceaseless delight. From the beginning, this painterly sense makes him a great artist. Then, as the tension between horizontal and vertical which is the natural configuration of his native Holland more and more dominates his art, and the upward thrust from the flat earth surface begins its obsession, he still possesses and practises this basic craftsmanship. "Composition in Oval: Trees", created in 1911 when Cubism was dominating him, is beautifully painted, whatever meaning can, or cannot, be read into its upward soaring lines; and this is true, too, of the two "Still Life with Gingerpot" which belong to this period. It is his last backward glance at nature, unless we remark the "Pier and Ocean" which scarcely differentiates itself from a "Composition in line and colour: Plus-Minus" of mere horizontal and vertical short lines. Those belong to 1914-15. During the thirty years of his remaining activities Mondriaan abandoned even that slight concession to human weakness and sensuousness. "New York City" of 1942, the last work exhibited at Whitechapel, is a rigid interweaving of uniformly painted coloured lines, coldly excellent in their tasteful arrangement, and such as any intelligent designer of fabric or linoleum might create. Nothing human is left. The baby has disappeared with the bath water.

With so many modern painters this icy nullity does not matter at all. Either there was no baby from the beginning, only some rather dirty water, or the child of their imagination

was so misshapen a monster that we welcome its disappearance. With Mondriaan it is different. The simplifications of nature which came around 1909-10 have a still beauty of form, a loveliness of restrained colour, and an intellectual awareness of the underlying tensions and harmonies of nature which makes each picture a revelation. "Dunes" with its Chinese reliance upon significant essentials; "Church Tower, Domburg" with its Gothic grandeur; or the many studies of one tree whose whole growth finds expression: such things betoken mastery. They speak to the senses and the spirit, and not only to the mind. I for one cannot easily accept the sacrifice of so much for so little, and all the abstract theorising of Mondriaan himself does not reconcile me to the loss. One further word about this exhibition is to congratulate Whitechapel firstly for organising an exhibition so fascinating and for hanging it so well, and, secondly, for producing one of the most perfect catalogues, with every one of the fifty-five pictures reproduced and a wealth of textual material including some of Mondriaan's own essays. Inevitably it costs 5s., which puts it out of reach of all but the working classes, but it takes its place among our art books and does real justice to its subject.

The other important public exhibition of the month provides a kind of comment on all this abstract theory. Art has a way of denying the *ne plus ultra* of artists: the tides of life flow beyond the Pillars of Hercules. So the latest fashions in painting have turned away from the abstract and—to indulge the newest jargon—the non-figurative. The Neo-Realists are the mode. Truth to tell, they are neither very new, nor very real. Echoes of Courbet, Van Gogh, Gauguin, come from the Paris studios to which Mr. Quentin Bell has made a pilgrimage to gather the material for an Arts Council Exhibition at the Tate Gallery. He has concentrated, rather arbitrarily I would say, on four artists: André Minaux, Roger Montané, Ginette Rapp, and Jean Vinay. Minaux, Montané and Vinay have already become familiarised in London at the Adams Gallery, which has specialised in this new development; and Ginette Rapp has been shown there and at the enterprising Obelisk Gallery in Crawford Street. Vinay, the oldest of these artists, for he was born in 1907, did not seem to me to fit in with the others nor to belong to this movement—if movement there be, for I find it difficult to find any common denominator between the Van Goghian lyricism of Minaux, the large unmodelled figures of Montané, the tragic landscapes of Mlle. Rapp and these stark impressions of Paris by Vinay. Minaux, for an artist only just over thirty, has astonishing assurance. His vast canvases such as "Les Deux Pêcheurs" (it covers over fifty square feet) or "Dans mon Jardin" (of over forty) are lovely decorations, charmingly painted and nobly organised. Happily he has escaped from the butcher's shop obsession which first held him, and accepts the fact that ladders leaning against a tree can be as real as the ugly *terribilia* of slaughtered beasts.

Ginette Rapp, who is still in her twenties, also tends to move a little away from her first mood of dire tragedy. Not that she is a cheerful painter, but cheerfulness is breaking in. She is a fine draughtsman, and these almost colourless landscapes are marked by a massive, solid quality, so that the mind goes back to Courbet. The study of a group of boats on the shore at Yport, the treeless Brittany landscapes in which the earth seems stripped to its rocky skeleton, the "Potato Gatherers" who have their affinity with Van Gogh's "Potato Eaters": everything she does has a basic quality which justifies the term Realist. Whatever echoes we find in Mlle. Rapp's work, there is nevertheless the note of her own strong artistic personality, and she strikes it without any trickery. For me she proved the most interesting of the four artists in this Tate exhibition.

Montané, continuing rather the large-scale and loosely drawn figures of Bonnard, has nothing in common with this tragic seriousness of matter and manner. He is a decorator, almost two-dimensional, and always ready to sacrifice the solidity of modelling for the appeal of pure colour patches.

This takes away from the reality in his case, takes away from the life. It is significant that he has turned to Italy for his themes, for his art is Mediterranean in its feeling, and the gaiety of its colour. We look to these Neo-Realists, however, for a crispness of drawing and painting which is not Montané's method. I would not make any foolish insistence on a label, arbitrary in any case, but we have had plenty of this style, or something near it, and we value the discipline of the others.

Our native contribution to the new look finds its focus at the Beaux Arts Gallery where in recent times we have become aware of artists like Jack Smith, Derrick Greaves, Edward Middleditch, Preston Goddard, and others. All of these are included in the Summer Exhibition there. Jack Smith is outstanding if only by sheer size, for his four enormous paintings, hung in the top part of the downstairs gallery, proclaim themselves by completely filling the two walls. Light-toned and almost colourless, they are daring and effective. To live with? No! Jack Smith refuses to compromise with the limited wall space of the contemporary home. He belongs to the generation which caters for public rather than private patronage, and paints gallery pieces. He is already represented in the Tate: a comment which reminds me that the Tate have now hung most excellently the XXth-century British painters (Jack Smith among them). Visitors to the French realists will be wise to cross the Sculpture Hall and to note how little truck with anything but realism our artists have had even of recent years when officialdom has so cultivated the modernist movement. The new Tate hanging, with John, Sickert, and other leaders being given each a section to themselves, and the rest grouped most helpfully around them, enables one to make a just estimate of the value and standing of our painters, though Wilson Steer shows at less than his stature and Matthew Smith at much more.

Back at the Beaux Arts, from which we made this diversion, the new figurative painting is in full swing. The new realism seems to have turned for its subjects to Old Men and female Nudes of terrifying ugliness. O Shade of Etty, an exhibition of whose work is showing at the Arts Council Gallery, a monument of the correct academic of the early XIXth century and a thought-provoking contrast with, say, Frank Auerbach's "E.O.W. Nude II" (to take an extreme example, for she looks like a clumsily painted seascape) at Beaux Arts, or Joseph Tilson's "Nude on a Bed", or one by Keith Cunningham. On the whole I prefer our painters when they eschew fauvism and tidy things up. A little Etty will do art no harm at this stage. Edward Middleditch's "Cat and Rose Tree", though his cat is of dubious pedigree, is more truly in the new manner; and the two Preston Goddard Harbour scenes, with their sensitive use of linear design, show this artist moving steadily to the fore.

The supreme British tidiness is to be found in the exhibition of "Britain in Water-colours", which has become an annual event at the R.W.S. Galleries. How perfectly and how prolifically our artists appear to manage this most difficult medium in a patterned topography is amazing. Perhaps the light and atmosphere of Britain exactly suits it; perhaps it is a natural expression of our modest lyricism and distrust of the grandiose; but for whatever reason the British have excelled in water-colour for two hundred years, or for a thousand if you choose to remember our achievement as miniaturists some centuries before the Italians established the grand style. Anyway the R.W.S. Galleries and a contemporary water-colour exhibition at Walkers show how well and how often we do it. It may be that here, too, we are faced with the *ne plus ultra* which drives the newcomer to some form of nihilism, and with his eye in a fine frenzy rolling he mixes up paint, coal dust, plaster and varnish, strews it in good measure over a four-foot canvas, calls it "Composition" or "Woman and Child" or what-you-will and gets it hung in the esoteric atmosphere of Gimpel Fils, where they understand these things. But that's another dead end.

# SOME ROYAL PLATE OF THE REGENCY

## BY PAUL STORR

By N. M. PENZER

**A**LTHOUGH George IV has been described as the first royal collector of antique plate, it should be remembered that his initiation into the understanding and appreciation of plate was largely due to a kindly act of his father when he was Prince of Wales. Farmer George's interest in agriculture led him, when recuperating at Weymouth in 1789, to visit a certain John Bridge, whose reputation and opinions were highly respected in all agricultural communities. A mutual respect and understanding was the outcome of their meeting, and when Bridge told George III about his cousin, also John Bridge, who had recently set up with a certain Philip Rundell on Ludgate Hill, he not only promised to see him, but kept his word in such a way that the future success of the firm was assured. John Bridge was sent for and at once found favour with George III, who not only granted him the royal warrant, but obtained for him a similar one for the Prince of Wales, as well as for other members of the Royal Family. It is impossible to say to what extent George III would have taken a personal part in increasing the royal collection, but there are distinct signs of such an interest before he became blind and lapsed into insanity. However this may be it is clear that on the establishment of the Regency, the future George IV, largely through the guidance of Bridge, sought to improve the royal collection through the services of Rundell, Bridge and Rundell. Most important was the foundation of the Grand Service to which he continually added up to his death in 1830. By this time the collections at Windsor and the other royal palaces were sufficiently important to warrant the printing of an inventory, and this was accordingly put in hand as soon as William IV was on the throne. Much of the work was doubtless done previously, and it is quite likely that the command for the inventory to be taken had actually been given by George IV. It appears that not more than five or six copies were printed, and it is interesting to note that this was the first time that an English royal inventory had been actually printed.

The work was entrusted to Rundell, Bridge & Co. (as it was then), and appeared in 1832. William IV signed and dated the three copies for St. James Palace, Windsor, and the British Museum, while he did likewise for the "working" copy belonging to Rundell, Bridge & Co. This particular copy, at present in my own collection, is of

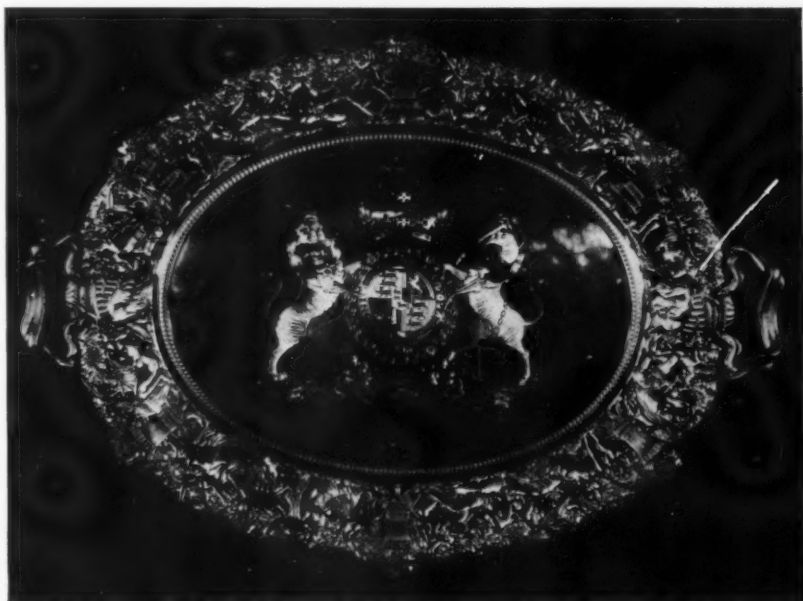
unique interest as certain items have been added in a contemporary hand, and it was of use to the compilers of the catalogue of the Exhibition of Royal Plate at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1954. Apart from these four copies, the only other one so far discovered is that in the Library of Congress at Washington, but it is not a "royal" copy, being neither signed nor bearing the royal imprint on the outside cover.

The value of the inventory lies only in its listing all plate in the London palaces and chapels, the Brighton Pavilion, Hampton Court and the Tower of London. It is quite useless to look for dates, makers' marks or even weights. Thus it should be used in conjunction with the George V inventory of 1914, but as only twelve copies of this were printed, and those for the personal use of His Majesty, its rarity will be readily understood. By one of those quite inexplicable chances one of these copies found its way to Charing Cross Road, where I was destined to discover it. From this inventory it is clear that the majority of orders given by the Prince Regent (1811-20) were executed by Paul Storr, although some pieces bear the marks of John Bridge and Philip Rundell.

Visitors to the recent exhibition of royal plate at the Victoria and Albert Museum will have seen several examples of Storr's work made during the Regency, but as only three were reproduced in the *Small Picture Book No. 37*, on sale at the stalls, no pictorial record exists of many other fine pieces. I had several of these specially photographed at the time of the exhibition, and I was also privileged to make reproductions of others from Her Majesty's own specially illustrated copy of the 1914 inventory.

From all of these I am here selecting seven, for the description of which both the 1832 and 1914 inventories are, naturally, of the utmost use. They are reproduced here by the gracious permission of Her Majesty.

No. 1. LARGE OVAL TWO-HANDLED TRAY or tea waiter, one of a pair. 1812-13. The broad border is pierced and embossed with Bacchanalian scenes depicting recumbent semi-nude figures—both male and female—accompanied by amorini who hold the *thyrsus* and *pedum*, the most familiar of Bacchic emblems. Large plaited baskets filled with grapes divide the various scenes, and the tiger or panther, who draws the car of Bacchus (Dionysus), is prominent throughout. Some of the figures raise wine cups either to receive in them the juice of the pressed vine or merely in salutation to their companions. The edge is entirely composed of grapes, vine leaves and tendrils. The centre is quite plain with a guilloche border except for the engraved royal arms of George III in the middle. The handles are formed of coiled serpents. The tray stands on four acanthus feet. The length is 27 or 29 in. (without the handles), according to the exact point at which you take the measure. It would appear that the compilers of the Victoria and Albert royal plate catalogue have been misled when they said (No. 84): "according to the William IV inventory [p. 5] this dish was intended for fish." In the first place it is not a dish at all, but a tray or tea waiter, and secondly, the fish dishes listed in the William IV inventory have nothing whatever to do with it. The correct reference will



be found on p. 62 under the heading "Tea Equipage," where we read of "Two oval Tea Waiters, chased with devices of Masks, Vases, Tigers, &c.; rich foliage and grape borders. Twenty-seven inches long."

No. 2. TWO-HANDLED CUP OR VASE of silver-gilt, known as the Theocritus Cup.

Although this famous cup has been exhibited and



photographed many times, it would appear that the original plate has been reproduced again and again. Thus we are only familiar with one side of the cup—that showing the maiden and the two youths. The present reproduction, which I had specially photographed at the Victoria and Albert exhibition, shows the other side—of the fisherman and the boy. Another point of interest is that on this side we see the cipher of Queen Charlotte, who gave the cup to the Prince Regent. The Latin imprint of Rundell, Bridge and Rundell will also be noticed at the extreme base of the plain circular foot. The cup was designed by John Flaxman, R.A., from the description of a cup in the First Idyll of Theocritus. It is formed in the shape of a Greek Krater, though, as I have explained elsewhere, Theocritus' original description clearly refers to a Kylix. The scene before us shows a muscular fisherman dragging his net, while above and to the right a boy squats on a rock intent on making a cricket-cage(?), while a fox is sniffing at his wallet placed behind him. The whole subject is framed above and laterally by vine branches and grapes. There is a torus-shaped base alternately decorated with acanthus and water-leaves in

relief. The handles, separating the two scenes, are of twisted vine stems attached low down the sides of the cup and passing underneath the torus base. The circular foot is quite plain.

Height: 9½ in. Weight: 90 oz. 15 dwt. Date 1812-13.

In order to judge how far Flaxman reproduced Theocritus' description, the following passage (from A. S. F. Gow's translation) will be of interest:

"By these [the other figures] is carved an old fisherman, and a rugged rock whereon the old man eagerly gathers up a great net for a cast as one that labours mightily. Thou wouldst say that he was fishing with all the strength of his limbs, so do the sinews stand out all about his neck, grey-haired though he be; yet his strength is as a youth's. And a little way from the sea-worn old man there is a vineyard with a fair load of reddening clusters, guarded by a little boy who sits upon its dry-stone wall. About him hang two foxes, and one goes to and fro among the vine-rows plundering the ripe grapes, while the other brings all her wit to bear upon his wallet, and vows she will not let the lad be until [she has raided his breakfast bread]. But the boy is plaiting a pretty cricket-cage of bonded rush and asphodel, and has more joy in his plaiting than care for wallet or for vines."

No. 3. SOUP TUREEN, one of a pair, gilt. Described in the 1832 inventory as "in the taste of Louis XIV." It is oval with a fluted cover on which, by way of handle, is a massed group of fish and vegetables, among which broccoli, mushrooms, lobsters and possibly rhubarb, can be seen. The body of the tureen is also fluted and has a reeded and strapped edge. The royal arms of George III are applied each side, being flanked by branches of oak foliage. The side handles represent foliated oak, while the four legs on which the tureen rests are also foliated with acanthus bending back in concave shape. The elaborate stand is fluted and

concave with beautifully wrought acanthus handles. An oyster will be noticed at the centre of the base. The whole rests on the backs of four tortoises above whose shells



branches of coral depend.

Height: 14 in. Weight: 1,073 oz.

Date 1812-13.

## SOME ROYAL PLATE OF THE REGENCY

No. 4. PORTION OF LARGE TEA-SERVICE, gilt. In the present illustration only a tea-pot, sugar-basin and cream ewer are shown. The original service consisted of one very large tea-urn, two smaller ones, three teapots, four sugar basins, four cream ewers and two large coffee-

Regent to build up the grand service in which he was so interested. The other items in the dessert service, such as fruit stands and dishes, sugar and cream vases, jelly cups, &c., were all of classical design ornamented with fauns, bacchantes, putti, &c.



pots. Rundell, Bridge and Rundell's bill has been preserved and is given in detail by Jones, *Gold and Silver of Windsor Castle*, p. 223. The total cost was £2,312 10s. 3d. It was made by Storr in 1813-14. According to the 1832 inventory several additions were made, e.g., two egg-frames, two toast-racks, two circular muffin dishes and covers, and six circular muffineers. From the 1914 inventory we find that they were made in 1815, 1814, 1815 and 1819 respectively, the last item is by Rundell, and all the rest by Storr.

Each piece is ornamented with heads of Medusa on a diaper background. The lower parts of the handles are composed of snakes; above they are ornamented with laurel leaves and terminate in a floral rosette. The stands rest on lion's paw feet, with Greek honey-suckle pendent between them.

No. 5. DESSERT PLATE, gilt. From a service of three dozen, described in the 1832 inventory as "Thirty-six very richly chased Dessert Plates, with vintage borders." As the illustration shows, the borders consist entirely of female figures reclining amidst bunches of grapes and vine leaves, or playing on musical instruments. The plain centres are engraved with the arms of the Prince Regent. The diameter is 9½ in., the date 1815-16, and the total cost £1,841 9s. 6d.

Of this sum £295 4s. was chanted for gilding and £32 8s. for engraving the royal arms. The total weight was 923 oz. 15 dwt.

These dessert plates formed part of the "Dessert Plate" ordered almost entirely by George IV when Prince



The seven illustrations in this article by Dr. Penzer are all reproduced by gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen.

Continued overleaf.

## APOLLO



No. 6. STANDING BOWL, gilt, one of a pair. These are described in the 1832 inventory as "Two Tazzas, with

Naphtha." Although the burning properties of naphtha were well known to the ancient Greeks and played an



Butterfly handles, and supported by Figures of Satyrs." This description, copied in the 1914 inventory, tells us little about these objects, and we must turn to Jones for a proper account. He writes (p. 152), "The stem is in the form of a satyr holding a wreath in the uplifted hands, and standing on a plain square pedestal. A loose bowl, in the form of a woman's breast, modelled after that of Pauline Borghese, sister of Napoleon I, with a butterfly handle, rests loosely in the wreath. One of the stands and the two loose bowls were made early in the XIXth century by Jean Baptiste Odier, of Paris, goldsmith to Napoleon I. . . . The other stand bears the London date-letter for 1816-17 and the marks of Paul Storr." The cost of the stand was £32 8s. 2d. Height: 10 $\frac{3}{4}$  in. Weight: 71 oz. 3 dwt.

No. 7. LAMP, gilt—one of a pair. In the 1832 inventory these are described as "Two very elegant Stands for the Sideboard, composed of a Phoenix rising from the Flames, on rocky plinths; to burn Naphtha." Although the burning properties of naphtha were well known to the ancient Greeks and played an important part in the "Greek Fire," it was not until 1781 that the idea of burning naphtha, obtained by the distillation of coal at low temperatures, for illuminating purposes suggested itself. As the lamps under consideration were made in 1817, this must be an early example of burning naphtha for domestic illumination, for it was not until 1820 that coal naphtha was used in the Holliday lamp, and subsequently on street barrows and stalls in open street markets.

The expression of fear mingled with courage and grim determination to fulfil its allotted fate which Storr has been able to introduce into the face of the phoenix is truly remarkable and shows him to be, if proof were needed, a true master of his craft. The lamps are 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. in height and together weigh 473 oz. 15 dwt. At the base of the plinth will be noticed a small lizard on the left and a frog on the right. Both lamps are engraved with the Prince Regent's badge. The price of the pair was £505 1s. 9d.

### APOLLO

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# THE VENETIAN VENUS AND GIORGIONE

By F. M. GODFREY



GIORGIONE. Sleeping Venus. Dresden Gallery.

WHEN Botticelli, inspired by the second Homeric Hymn, painted his "Venus Renascent from the Sea," though he embodied in her the passing beauty of Simonetta Vespucci, he gave form to the learning and a poetic ideal of Florentine humanism. But it was in Venice and nearly thirty years after that the canonical form of the reclining nude was created, whose reflection can be traced far through the following centuries: "GIORGIO DA CASTELFRANCO'S SLEEPING VENUS" of the Dresden Gallery. She, too, is the embodiment of an artist's ideal, but as a human reality and not as a learned abstraction and poetic fiction.

In 1646 Carlo Ridolfi wrote in his *Meraviglie d'Arte*: "*una deliziosa Venere ignuda dormiente è in casa Marcella, ed a piedi è Cupido con augellino in mano che fu terminato da Tiziano.*" The Cupidino and his bird have been painted out, and we know that the landscape and buildings are by the hand of Titian; for we shall meet them again in the "Noli Me Tangere" at the National Gallery and in the "Sacred and Profane Love" of the Borghese Gallery. Nor will Titian be able for many years to forget the compelling example of this classical nude.

Giorgione's Venus lies asleep in an open country, and her abandon and poise are such that she appears the very genius of sleep. She reclines on a white silken drapery, and her arm, drawn under her head, rests upon a dark red cushion. Nothing disturbs the even melody of her form, her oneness with the undulating hills and starred meadows where she lies embedded. The Grecian wanness and serenity of this impeccable human form, so softly modulated in the light, is sheltered by the rock, overgrown with moss and a single sprig. The caressing lines that define her body convey a sense of lassitude and repose, re-echoed in the swelling meadowland, the banks of clouds. A single tree lends foil to the distance, and the rustic buildings enhance the stillness of the scene. This is a moment of unique significance in mythological painting. Larger shapes, more ample, more luscious, of more unbounded vitality will follow; none of

such noble restraint, such melodious rhythm. The history of art knows many idiosyncrasies. In 1514 the octogenarian Giovanni Bellini, Giorgione's one-time master, experienced a miraculous rejuvenation and painted the serenely pagan "Feast of the Gods," now in the Wiedener Collection, and in the following year the "VENUS AT HER TOILET." Had the aged master become his pupil's pupil? The "Ignuda" of the Vienna Gallery is perhaps not a Venus. There is no cupid, no quiver: a picture of a young woman at her toilet, such as the noble patrons of the age delighted to hang in their bedchamber and which even the stern religious painters of the north, van Eyck and van der Weyden, are said to have supplied. Bellini's "Ignuda" and the almost contemporary "Venus Anadyomene" by Titian have enriched the world of mythological icons by a new upright shape of the goddess. Henceforth, besides the recumbent Venus in countless forms and variations, we shall meet with a three-quarter length representation of "Venus at her Toilet," such as Titian conceived in one of his later works (1550) and Rubens in his early manhood. As the shape of the former was determined by Giorgione, even to the svelte and supple elegancies of Velazquez, so the latter must be traced to the ingenuous, virginal image of Bellini.

His most comely nymph is seated upon a bench, covered with rugs and with linen. As she gazes into the mirror, abstracted almost and without vanity, she seems quite unaware of her own exquisite loveliness. The youthful bloom of her body, the coy and dewy shapes of maidenhood, the Venetian richness of hair and limb, the dark foil of the wall, the distant view of the Alps, make Bellini's "Ignuda" a symbol of the innocent paganism of the early Renaissance.

Nor was Titian prone to forget this masterly conception of the female nude when in the same year of 1515 he painted his "VENUS RISING FROM THE SEA." It is almost a translation from the Bellinesque into the greater vibrancy, the coarser grain, the sculptural form and the stark realism of Titian's idiom. It is one of his loveliest inventions. Venus has risen from the waves of the solitary ocean, and as

GIOVANNI BEL-LINI. Venus at her Toilet. Vienna Museum.



she clasps the long strands of her hair which frame her delicate, pensive face in the shimmering half-light of early dawn, half-turning, with questioning gaze out of her dark shaded eyes, she has something of the dream-quality of Giorgione. Yes, in the poetic abstraction of her countenance, she is the spiritual sister of the more earthly Venus of the "Amor Sacro e Profano."

The ripe, rounded forms of her body, moulded in alternating planes of strong shadow and light, are in strange contrast to the tender and shapely face. Titian's turbulent and sensuous worldliness will become manifest in many a pagan riot of painting. Here, in this solitary enigmatic figure, alone with the elements from which she has sprung, he has worked a spell of enduring charm. It is his closest approximation to the spirit of Giorgione, the first of a long and glorious line of poesie.

Among the older pupils of Giorgione, Palma was most deeply affected by the "Sleeping Venus." His own goddess, also at Dresden, half-raised upon her couch of flowers and drapery, painted with broader sweeps of the brush, enchanting in silvery tones and Venetian brightness of hair and flesh, is similarly poised in the shadow of dark brushwood, with the wide-open vista of receding hills and square buildings; an invaluable link between Giorgione's and Titian's concept of the goddess of love.

Thirty years after the "Sleeping Venus" of Giorgione, Titian revives some part of the lovely design in the famous picture of the awakening hetæra, the so-called "VENUS OF URBINO" of 1538. But the flowing line which was the touchstone of beauty in the earlier divinity, is interrupted here by the steeper angle of the half-raised head, the bend of her right arm resting upon the pillow, the swelling curves of her body. Titian's Venus is no longer goddess, but a handsome courtesan with moist, languid, wanton eyes. Classical remoteness and calm have become alluring and sophisticated. Nor is the enchantress conceived as part of a pastoral landscape, but relaxing in a rich interior upon a crimson couch, where the radiance of her body is enhanced by the green velvet curtain behind. It is a domestic scene, not a mythology, almost a picture of genre, with the lapdog curled

up at the feet of his mistress, the servants busy at the chest, the flower vase in the window recess.

It is like a pause in Titian's concept of heroic drama. Giorgione's "Sleeping Venus" still haunts his memory, and he used a living model of great charm and romantic appeal



TITIAN. Venus Anadyomene. Bridgewater House. By Courtesy of the Earl of Ellesmere.

## THE VENETIAN VENUS AND GIORGIONE

TITIAN. Venus of Urbino.  
Uffizi Gallery.

in a composition where all is luxuriance and refinement, an exquisite feast of the senses.

Giorgionesque, not in pictorial arrangement and form, but in the enigma of human relationship is also the so-called "ALLEGORY OF THE MARQUIS D'AVALLS" in the Louvre. This is no longer looked upon as a farewell of a general going to the wars, but as a symbol of human existence,

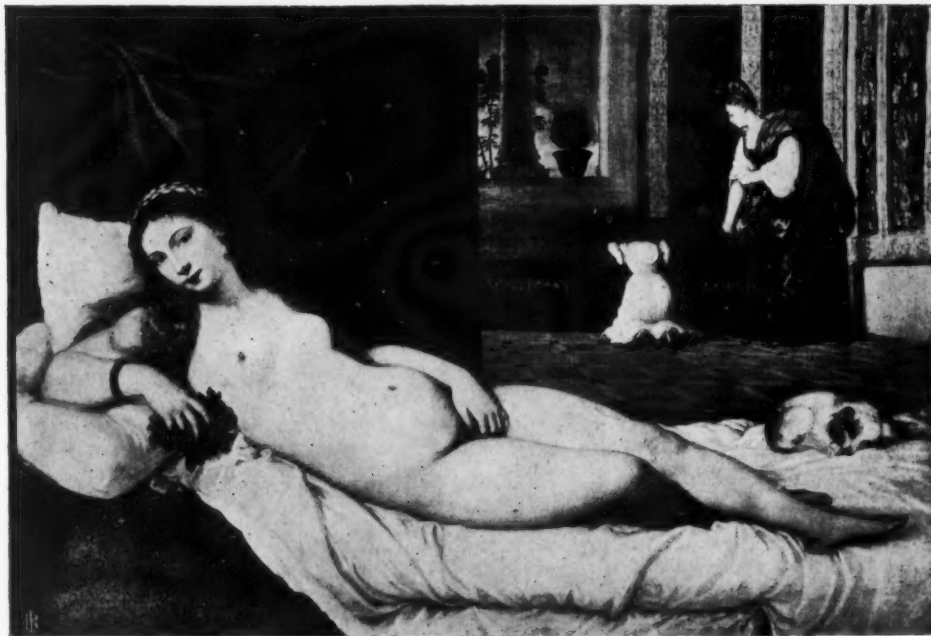
charged with an enduring mystery; it is an allegory indeed, if that word signifies a state of the soul which cannot be rendered by words, but is intelligible through the senses.

The unresolved mystery of a glance, a gesture, a mere mode of being, as in the beautiful Venetian lady holding the glass bowl in her lap, symbol of the globe itself or of brittle fortune—is like an echo from the realm of Giorgione. Upon her breast the grave warrior lays a gentle hand, and as he gazes into space, benign, contemplative and profound, time seems suspended for him, too. Mars and Venus come to mind; gentle goddess of love with golden tresses and pearls and a dark green robe, in the presence of armed Mars whose crimson sleeve under the shining plate forms the bridge to the other participants of the scene. For there is Cupid with the quiver and myrtle-wreathed Faith by his side, emphatically protesting her true affection, her enduring devotion, overshadowed by Hope, who raises heavenwards her basket of roses; for Hope is the promise of fruitfulness and fulfilment.

So deeply is the Venetian rooted in dream and poetry that even his representation of Love assumes mythological grandeur, where Faith and Hope and Cupid must needs join with Mars and Venus to complete the symposium, the symbolism of love. "The man, while solemnly taking possession of his bride, consecrates to her his love, faith and hope; she, in accepting both, his sway and his devotion, finds herself responsible for a thing as perfect as it is delicate: their common happiness" (E. Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*).

Already in the 1540's Titian had moved towards the monumental baroque, composite, incandescent tints and the rapturous azure infinity of cosmological landscape. The receding cirque of rocks, surging streams and dark undergrowth, the whole holocaust of savage nature, painted in the boldest pictorial manner, in coalescent patches of thick pigment, radiant whites and cobalt and olive, would have oppressed the gentle, the elegant and domesticated Venus of Urbino. But the "VENUS WITH THE LUTE PLAYER" is no longer recumbent; wide-awake she has raised herself upon her couch and looks into the distance from large enchanted eyes. A music-book is by her side, the lute is silent in her hand, and while the lutanist looks across to this triumphant deity, Cupid crowns her with a wreath of flowers.

At this period (1545) Titian delights in powerful bodily form, majestic shapes, a royal splendour of the flesh. Ripe-



ness, abundance and amplitude characterise the goddess who is no longer of the chaste, virginal type, but a Venus Matrix, a nurturing goddess of the earth. The legacy of Giorgione is now left far behind. The order of grouping is reversed; Venus is on the right, her posture raised, all her senses alive, active, exultant. She is the centre of radiant light, where roseate flesh-tints and bluish shadows softly modulate the curves and swellings of womb and limb. The dark-red velvet hangings repeat the melodious line of her body, and the vinous or mulberry-red of her couch with the flickering silvertints and creases add lustre and movement to her monumental repose. Nor is the lutanist less weighty and less precious in his golden-sleeved doublet of silvery grey, who with a sudden twist of the body, while he tunes his instrument or plucks its strings, looks across to the goddess. There is a baroque intensity in the tilt of the figures, the pattern on the couch, the fleeting clouds, the slanting rocks and the dabs of composite colour in earth and



TITIAN. Venus, Mars, Love, Hope and Faith, usually called "The Allegory of the Marquis d'Avall." Louvre.

TITIAN. *Venus with the Lute Player*. Fitzwilliam Museum.

tree and water, and the glittering highlights on the musician's dress.

Of this Venus, Titian painted several variants, the best known, perhaps, in Madrid, with the organ-player, but colder and more formalised, with two converging rows of poplars in place of the breathtaking primeval landscape and a more unpleasant individual as musician.

The same proud model of Venetian beauty had to serve yet another fancy in Titian's representation of the goddess of love, the half-length "VENUS WITH THE MIRROR" of the Mellon collection, whose fullness and stateliness is not a whit inferior to the Medici Venus at Florence. Of her Winckelmann wrote that "she is like a rose which opens at the first light of dawn, and she is coming of age; like fruit before they ripen she is chaste and firm, as her bosom shows, which is richer than in tender maidens." Like her antique sister, Venus has placed one hand upon her breast while with the other she clasps her robe, precious stuffs of embroidered velvet and fur which, with caressing touch, frame and enhance her body. As she looks into the mirror, which a delicious putto supports, her face lights up with exaltation and wonder.

Classical art knew the goddess of love in two principal guises, upright or recumbent, solitary or in the presence of Cupid. By mid-cinquecento Titian had so varied the inimitable shapes of Giorgione that the second "Venus of the Uffizi" must be considered his final, his consummate page on the subject. Here the same heroic nude as in the Lute and Organ-player versions, a portrait of his daughter Lavinia, looks with deep dream-like gaze into the eyes of a small Amorino by her side, while a melancholy crepuscular landscape reflects the mood of this ripe and autumnal goddess. Then, in the fifties, when the harvest of the great poesie, Danae, Diana, Europa, was gathered in, Titian wrote to the most catholic king with remarkable candour of his new plans and projects.

"And as one beheld Danae which I formerly sent to your majesty in full frontal view, I thought to vary this second Poesia and show the female figure from the back, so that the room where these pictures will be hung should be more agreeable. Soon I shall send the Poesia of Perseus and Andromeda which will yet offer another view than the two others, and the same is true of Jason and Medea." This was the letter which accompanied in 1544 the despatch of "VENUS AND ADONIS" to King Philip II.

Not a word betrayed the elemental passion, the fateful drama which is the real subject of this composition, one of the grandest designs in Titian's œuvre.

Adonis, the impassioned huntsman, comely and light-hearted youth of heroic mould, is bidding farewell to Venus, who, full of foreboding, restrains the impatient, the inconstant lover. Her gaze is steeped in his, with intemperate persuasion, her whole being, love and fear and the foreknowledge of his doom are in her embrace. Adonis casts a last smile, a half-oblivious glance upon the goddess, making



light of her fear, unwilling to delay his departure, drawn by the mastiffs' zeal, the call of the chase.

The pictorial intensification, the selection of the crucial moment in a literary concept, the crystallisation of past and coming events in one telling action reveals the working of Titian's poetic genius. The tension is almost too great, the atmosphere pregnant with tragic consequence and with great frustrated passion. And all this is told in one entangled group of heroic bodies. Venus has risen from her scarlet couch—which is of the same colour as the smock of Adonis—



TITIAN. *Venus with a Mirror*.

By courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

## THE VENETIAN VENUS AND GIORGIONE



TITIAN. Venus and Adonis. *National Gallery.*

and her shining, slender shape entwines the sunburnt virile form of the hunter. The violent turn of her body is no less urgent than the parting gesture of the hero. Never has movement been more poignantly expressed in paint. While the goddess still clings to his arm and body, Adonis is on the move, his right foot firmly planted on the ground with vigorous stride, his right arm on his spear, his left clasping the mastiff's leash. This magnificent beast, of brownish grey and of white, in a formal sense repeats certain lines in the shape of Venus.

In these "poesie" Titian derives his most enchanting harmonies from an all-pervading golden mellowness of tone, from the secret interplay of fair and darker skin and hair, the saturated blue and white and rose of sky and cloud, the autumn tints of bank and foliage. The whole scene assumed a richly decorative character where the tree with the quiver, the upturned golden vessel, the chain of pearls in the golden tresses of Venus add an element of the precious and the ornamental. Burckhardt, in a brilliant passage of his contributions to the history of Italian art, invented a whole novelette to express his enthusiasm. "Among the mortal and immortal darlings of Venus," he wrote, "Adonis was the first to be glorified with her; possibly already by Giorgione in a central panel between the birth and the death of Adonis. But

Titian created the wonderful group of the departing hero and of the seated nude in her magnificently violent turn; with this he implied —what so few have succeeded in doing—a number of preceding moments: Adonis had already once got up; but then he took his place again on the couch by the goddess, in full hunting-gear, and now he storms off; in addition the impatience of the dogs, totally insensitive to the pathetic moment, and a symbolism of light where the head of Venus reflects the radiance from the chest of her favourite."

Passion kindled to brightest flame in the Adonis picture has become mellow, restrained and almost tender in the last allegory of the octogenarian Titian, known as "THE EDUCATION OF CUPID" (Galleria Borghese, Rome). Here a beautiful woman, a coronal in her hair, who blindfolds a restive Cupid, looks over her shoulder distractedly, where another love-god tries to attract attention by whispering in her ear. The same young woman who represented marital faith in the Avalos picture, here carrying the quiver, implores Venus not to entrust the dangerous weapons of love to the blind Amorino, while a third attendant, more impetuous and grave, in the garb of the huntress Diana, proffers the bow.

It is "the choice of Beauty between blind Cupid and clear-sighted Love," painted in vigorous forms and deep, simple colours, where crimson, ultramarine, yellow and green lie side by side in the full radiance of the light.

Beauty, nay, the goddess of love, is shown in gentle suspense, listening to wisdom, to moderation, though against her will and not yet decided at heart. Her hand that blindfolded Cupid seems arrested; clear-sighted Love may prevail over the unseeing mischievous demon; but the drama remains unresolved, though virtuous persuasion is in the ascendancy. For this is the Venus who, according to the Neo-Platonic philosopher, "opposes and removes from the soul immodest desires and turns the mind of maidens and wives from carnal love to purity" (Panofsky). Beauteous forms and deep saturated colours fill with their powerful vibrations the whole width of the canvas in this last of the master's poesie, no less forceful and enigmatic than his earlier revelations of mythological truth.



TITIAN. The Education of Cupid.  
*Borghese Gallery, Rome.*

# ENGLISH FURNITURE with BALL and CLAW and LION-PAW FEET

By

GEOFFREY WILLS



←  
Fig. I. Dutch walnut chair of about 1720. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum.



→  
Fig. II. English walnut chair; the original needlework seat-cover is dated 1722. Courtesy of Cecil Higgins Museum Bedford.

THE ball-and-claw foot is one of the most familiar features of English furniture, so much so that it has become synonymous with XVIIIth-century mahogany of the so-called Chippendale period of 1750-75. Through common usage over the years, most of the furniture dating from this quarter of a century is pictured in the minds of the general public as terminating in ball-and-claw feet, each one of which was carved by the unwavering hand of Thomas Chippendale. In spite of the unheeded words of experts it would seem that the terms "Chippendale" and "ball-and-claw" have become, and will doubtless remain, interlinked and generic.

A writer in the *Dictionary of English Furniture* (1954 edition, Vol. I, p. 26, under the heading Ball and Claw) suggests that the ball-and-claw motif owes its origin to the Chinese dragon—a fabulous beast that is depicted usually with one clawed foot outstretched, grasping or pursuing a pearl. This well-known animal is painted, cast, carved or embroidered *ad nauseam* on Far Eastern porcelain, bronze, jade, silks and other productions imported into Europe during the past three hundred years.

The dragon (*lung*) is regarded by the Chinese as one of the four supernatural creatures, the other three being the tortoise, the kylin and the phoenix. Apart from appearing often with representations of the god of wealth (*Ts'ai shen*), owing to the appropriate belief that it would effectively guard treasure, the dragon is also the emblem of imperial power and the device of the emperor. The imperial dragon is credited popularly with having five claws to each of its four feet as opposed to four claws for less important personages, but this distinction was not adhered to with strictness. The pearl pursued or grasped by the dragon is said to represent the disc of the sun—the device of the dragon-and-pearl symbolising to the Eastern mind the power of a storm or of rain over the sun.

It may well be that this decorative fragment of Oriental

mythology served as the inspiration of European woodcarvers who, without knowing or caring about the significance of the theme to the Chinese, adopted a portion of it to form the ends of chair and table legs. Or, more likely, perhaps it was taken directly from an imported piece of Eastern furniture, notably the stand of one of the highly popular lacquered cabinets that formed a high proportion of the cargoes of East Indiamen.

Whatever its earliest origins, so far as England is concerned it would seem without doubt that the ball-and-claw foot reached this country from the Continent at the end of the XVIIth century. Its arrival on these shores coincided with the coming of the Prince of Orange, King William III, and it may be noted that another widely used decorative device, the acanthus leaf, came from abroad at the same time.

The craftsmen who followed the advent of the foreign-born king to these shores had been preceded shortly by a much larger invasion of emigrants when the Edict of Nantes was revoked by Louis XIV. This event took place in 1685, and caused the flight of many thousands of Huguenots from France. Great numbers of them came to England, and their industry and skill infused a new life into many of the arts. It is principally as silversmiths that their names have come down to us, for in that occupation many of them were noted in the records of the Goldsmith's Company, but there are few crafts on which they did not leave their mark, and on which their descendants, in many instances, have continued to exercise their traditional virtuosity.

A Dutch walnut chair made shortly after the turn of the XVIIIth century is shown in Fig. I. The double-scrolled uprights of the back and the carved cresting that unites them are typical features. No less obvious Continental signs are the rather clumsily curved legs, the crested stretcher and the "mean" ball-and-claw feet. In some cases there is a close affinity between the design of walnut pieces made in Holland and in England, but this chair is unmistakably Dutch in every

## BALL AND CLAW AND LION-PAW FEET



Fig. III. English mahogany dining chair, about 1740.

particular. Where the Continental feeling is less strongly expressed the furniture often passes for English. This is not hard to understand when it is realised that it is often impossible to tell with certainty if a particular specimen was made in the Netherlands or was the work of a Dutch *émigré* who had settled in England.

Of similar date to the Dutch chair is an English version of the same basic style, illustrated in Fig. II. The uprights of the back are seen to be more simply curved and the impractical cresting is not present. The legs curve gracefully, and both the acanthus leaves on the knees and the ball-and-claw feet are finely carved. This chair is one of a set of eight added last year to the distinguished collection at the Cecil Higgins Museum at Bedford.

At the same time as the ball-and-claw foot was coming



Fig. IV. Dutch mahogany cabinet with lion paw and tail supports. About 1770.  
*Courtesy of Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery.*

into use the lion-paw also was finding favour. For this there does not seem to be any particular origin, other than the fact that the paw of a lion would seem to be no less decorative than the head itself of the king of beasts. The head had been used on silver for some while before it was introduced here for the decoration of furniture. In many instances, both the feet and the head of the animal are found ornamenting the same piece: side-tables have the frieze centring on a lion-mask and the massive cabriole legs terminate in lion's-paw feet with naturalistically carved hairy hocks. Arm-chairs, again, have lion-mask terminals to the arms, and the legs are similarly treated to those of the side-tables.

A 1740 version of the lion-paw is shown in Fig. III. This mahogany dining-chair is probably of country make; the heavy legs are carved on the knees with shells and acanthus leaves, and the paw feet are treated with great realism.



Fig. V. English mahogany dining chair, c. 1750.



Fig. VI. Mahogany circular dining-table, circa 1825.

Again of Dutch origin is the cabinet shown in Fig. IV. This is of late XVIIIth century date, circa 1770; a fact revealed by the classical *patera* at the division of the two doors. The four feet are each carved to represent the paw of a lion, and to make this lion *motif* more complete the central leg is designed surprisingly to simulate the tail of the animal. This unusual feature is equalled by the carving of the doors, which are cleverly fluted in serpentine curves.

As opposed to the consistency with which all the feet of the Dutch cabinets are treated, it may be pointed out that this was not invariably the case. Chairs and tables are commonly found which have eagle (or dragon) and lion *motifs* intermingled—for example, eagle-head arm terminals and lion-paw feet—a feature that the makers did not apparently consider at all remarkable.

While at first the plain ball-and-claw vied with the hirsute lion-paw, the former eventually triumphed. Both had displaced the plain club foot, and they remained in vogue, one or the other, over a period of some seventy-five years. The ball-and-claw continued in use, more or less continually, throughout the period, and rare walnut examples are known with the claws inset with bone or ivory talons. A good and typical mahogany chair of the 1750's is illustrated in Fig. V. In this, the straight top-rail of the chair in Fig. III has developed into a serpentine shape, the low carving on it centring on a pagoda-like acanthus ornament. The piercing of the splat is complicated and is also carved. The front legs, linked by a shallow gadrooned frieze, have knees with carved scroll and acanthus pattern terminating in well-balanced ball-and-claw feet.

This last chair is perhaps the typical Chippendale of

popular conception. It is a fact, however, that not one single ball-and-claw foot is featured among the many designs for tables, chairs and other furniture in Thomas Chippendale's *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director*. This applies to the first edition of 1754 as much as to the third of eight years later. Equally, Robert Mainwaring's *Cabinet and Chair-Maker's Real Friend and Companion* of 1765 contains neither a ball-and-claw nor a lion-paw foot in any one of its forty copperplates of designs.

It would seem that by 1754 these feet were no longer in the height of fashion and their continued usage was the result of individual taste or country ignorance. Together with the cabriole leg the carved foot was replaced by the straight tapering support with moulded spade foot. The lion-paw did, however, triumph finally over the ball-and-claw; it returned in the form of the brass cap-castor to be found on pillar dining-tables and sofa-tables from 1780 onwards. It also appears as the support of many of the circular tables that were widely used in the first decades of the XIXth century. The lion-mask was never really eclipsed, and made its greatest decorative contribution as the holder of the ring handle of brass used on so much furniture between 1790 and 1825.

If the origin of the ball-and-claw was Oriental, then it can be accounted yet another example of the complete assimilation of an Eastern feature by the West. In any case, whatever the original inspiration may have been, there is little doubt that it is still one of the most popular and esteemed features of old furniture. It is a feature that seems unlikely to be supplanted in the affections of either collectors or the general public.

## A SHAFT FROM APOLLO'S BOW: On Growing to Like It

THE Institute of Contemporary Arts began with the modest hope that it would grow into a London version of the Museum of Modern Art of New York. To this end it optimistically appealed to people with modern minds and lots of money to raise—was it £40,000 or £400,000? But British millionaires being neither so numerous nor so childlike as those in America (and my co-contributor, Prof. Erik Larsen, indicates that even these trans-Atlantic innocents are showing signs of revolt), these trifling sums were not forthcoming. However, on its quiet first-floor in Dover Street the I.C.A. still carries gallantly on challenging the indifferent with the incredible, and proving its president's thesis that if anarchy is permitted to prevail in art there is no limit to what artists will get up to.

The exhibition of New Sculptors and Painter-Sculptors, most of them comparatively young, indicates that the term "sculpture" means almost anything from bits of coloured paper torn from popular magazines and stuck rather haphazardly on a sheet, to a single piece of thin wire welded on a disc. It also includes lumps of plaster looking like the dough being poured from the mixing basin into a cake tin, but labelled "Seated Figure" or "Leaping Cat" or what-have-you. William Scott has turned from the painting of frying pans to a terrifying erection in concrete with a tray-shape standing on end above a convex protuberance which I suspect is a human figure, for the tray wears a sort of incipient nose, and the convexity looks like a belly; but in this, of course, I may be wrong. Another painter, Peter Potworowski, has stuck together some horrid pieces of jagged slate soaring to about four feet and has christened this amorphous and menacing creation "Figure." As a distinguished contemporary comments in its universal kindness: "The visitor must be warned that these and works by other young artists on view at Dover Street will call to an unusual degree on his sympathy and patience if he is to grow to like them"—a masterpiece of under-statement.

Let it be agreed, however, that if an Institute of Anything wishes to indulge this curious capering on the lunatic fringe of expression it should be free to do so, so long as it

pays its own piper to play this strange tune, or encourages plutocrats who are willing to indulge its whimsies. In that demand for the freedom of the individual I am all with President Sir Herbert Read. But there is one aspect of this show revealed by the catalogue which I feel to be much more sinister. That is that so many of these sculptors are teaching at the art schools. That is a question of more than the personal freedom of an artist or an art institute.

Firstly, I cannot quite conceive how anybody whose conception of the technique of sculpture is so wildly un-academic can "teach" even at Bath Academy of Art—which, incidentally, appears to have a very strong holding in this particular exhibition. Can anarchy be taught? Or do these fortunate young men and women receive comfortable salaries from the public education authorities merely for urging their students to wilder and wilder excursions into the monstrous? Or is the shining example of the presence on the pay-roll of somebody who can get away with these amorphous messes of plaster, menacing specimens of welded iron and wire, or precariously balanced bits of broken slate, regarded as being of sufficient inspirational value to justify their virtual endowment from the rates and taxes? How are they appointed? By whom? And, above all, why? One can realise that once the governing power at a school is given to somebody who is wedded to this sort of thing nobody with academic attainments or standards need apply. It would be interesting to know how many of our art schools are in this category.

Perhaps some enterprising M.P. with an interest in education and culture, as well as an eye on public money and its expenditure, might care to bring the matter before the appropriate Minister. As a supplementary question he might inquire why so many of these artists are also able to claim "bought by the Arts Council" or "bought by the Tate Gallery". When this type of work is taught in the schools to the rising generation, bought officially, and honoured by public exhibition, it is clearly our own fault and not that of the authorities who thus lavishly spend our money if we do not "grow to like it".

# COLLECTORS' PIECES AMONG PUPPETS

By ERIC BRAMALL



Fig. I. Head of a puppet from the Clowes troupe of Marionettes.



Fig. II. Puppet from Swatow in heavily embroidered robes.

OF the many examples of artistry and craftsmanship sought by collectors surely the most neglected are those created by the puppeteer, whose art is the oldest form of dramatic expression in the world. From it has sprung the live theatre as we know it to-day, and on it artists, craftsmen, composers and playwrights have lavished their talents with freedom and spontaneity, yet with the passionate intensity with which a child might enjoy a favourite toy; for in its most sophisticated form it has been the plaything of imperial courts from the time of the early Chinese dynasties to the present day.

Its greatest period in this respect was, perhaps, the XVIIIth century, when the aristocracy of Europe caused elaborate puppet theatres to be built in their palaces, and the great Haydn himself was commissioned to write operettas for the puppets to perform before the Empress Maria Theresa. Throughout history the wooden actors have cast their spell upon the great. To mention just a few: Milton, who wrote "Paradise Lost" after seeing a puppet presentation of the story of Adam and Eve; Shakespeare (whose *Julius Cæsar* is said to have been first performed by puppets); Ben Jonson; and Goethe, who received inspiration for his *Faust* from his own puppet theatre. Aristotle and Plato mention puppet shows, and in more recent times, Dickens, R. L. Stevenson and G. B. Shaw praised the puppets, and Sir E. Gordon Craig foresaw the day when once again the live actor would give way to the puppet.

Puppetry is as old as civilisation, probably much older, for its roots are buried deep in dark religious rites in the Far East, certainly thousands of years away in time; yet from the XIIIth century it has helped to tell the story of the Christian religion in the Western world, the wooden saints and devils travelling from church to church across

Europe spreading the doctrine of heaven and hell. How many countless thousands must have crowded the churches to watch the Creation, the Flood, the Fall of Sodom, the Coming of Christ and the Crucifixion? And who should have the temerity to play God the Father but a puppet of wood?

Although the puppet has survived every catastrophe which has befallen mankind, and is to-day gaining in popularity after his decline of a hundred years ago, his ancestors, in the making of whom time, expense and sheer artistry were employed without restraint, have become to a great extent lost to the world. Many have perished in wars and conflagrations, many have been relegated to the dust-heap or thrown to children to play with and destroy. But now and again a survivor appears in some dusty chest, sometimes discovered in an unused room in a great palace, wrapped in a piece of tapestry; sometimes emerging from the darkness of a tomb after three thousand years of inactivity. Most of these survivors find their way into national collections, but occasionally they become available to the interested private collector.

Quite often one sees in an antique shop a ragged, moth-eaten relic of the Victorian age, a pathetic—even repulsive—gangling mass of arms and legs, caught like a fly in the web of its own tangled strings, its spangled costume faded and tarnished, its face chipped and pallid, its real-glass eyes dulled with the grime of many years. There are those who will buy this sorry remnant of better days and restore it to something of its former glory, but even at its best it will not rank high as a work of art, nor will it be a beautiful thing, but it will perhaps forge another link in the chain of puppet history. Fig. I shows the head of a puppet from the once-famous Clowes troupe of marionettes which lay in a crate



Fig. III. Three principal characters from the puppet version of the Ramayana.

exposed to the elements for a good many years before it was found and restored. Until comparatively recently this puppet was dirty and decayed, its working parts rusted and useless, but now once again it treads the boards, but of a contemporary marionette theatre, faintly echoing, nevertheless, a memory of the flimsy, tinselled unreality of the harlequinade, the plush hangings and smoking oil-footlights of the Victorian puppet theatre.

There are many kinds of puppets for the collector, almost

all of them difficult to find, which makes puppet-hunting such an interesting sport. As in all collecting the finest examples are the rarest and the most expensive, though compared with other works of art puppets are ridiculously cheap in price, and exceptional bargains are to be picked up reasonably frequently. I have seen a magnificently carved and sumptuously dressed Italian puppet of the late XVIIIth century, in brilliant condition, priced at less than twenty pounds. This was a "marionette" or puppet worked by



Fig. IV. Wayang Golek figure in carved wood dressed in native batik.



Fig. V. A fine example of glove-puppet by Mary Saunders.

strings, elaborately jointed even to moving eyes. There are also rod-puppets, whose action is brought about by slender rods; hand-and-rod puppets into which one of the manipulator's hands is thrust to give movement to the body of the figure, while with his other hand he moves the puppet's arms, again by means of slender rods: glove-puppets, which are fitted over the manipulator's hand like the familiar Punch figures; shadow-puppets, which are rarely seen by the audience, who watch only their shadows cast upon a screen; and the simple, flat, cut-out figures of the "Juvenile Drama," which, printed on sheets of paper from wood blocks, copper plates or the lithograph stone were known affectionately as "Penny Plain, Twopence Coloured," from the respective prices of the plain and hand-coloured sheets, both of which are now fast becoming rarities.

From the Continent and the Far East, where puppetry has never suffered the absolute decline experienced in England, the supply of beautiful puppets is not quite so nearly exhausted. From France come lovely doll-like creatures with wigs of real hair, and dressed in all the finery of the French Court; from Germany puppets carved in meticulous detail with expressions recapturing the intensity of Gothic saints; from Austria, too, come superbly carved characters, the XVIIIth-century examples still exhalng the atmosphere of an elegant rococo age; and from the Low Countries come small rod-puppets with heads modelled in terra-cotta, fired and painted in enamel colours. Italy, the original home of puppets in Europe, whence they came from the East, has produced many types and characters, and especially coveted are those from the *Commedia dell'arte*, whilst Southern Italy and Sicily offer magnificent knights in full suits of armour, used in performances of *Orlando Furioso*, the play which lasts a whole year, an episode being given every day, and the climax of each episode an exciting battle between Christian and Saracen knights, in which armour crashes against armour, swords and scimitars flay the air, and heads roll into the audience!

Perhaps the most beautiful puppets of all are those from the Far East—from China, Japan, Burma and Java. Here puppetry began and traditional characters have come down through the centuries, telling stories of legendary gods and heroes, of fair princesses menaced by demon kings, of princes and monkey armies, of love stories as tender as that of Romeo and Juliet. The Chinese delight in shadow puppets, delicately cut in paper and tinted so that their shadows cast upon a screen suggest the fragile figures on a porcelain vase. Then there are rod-puppets with porcelain heads and hands, moving stiffly in their heavy, embroidered robes like the puppet from Swatow here illustrated (Fig. II). This fearsome-looking fellow was bought for thirty shillings in a Kensington antique shop.

Burmese puppets are mostly carved in a soft, fragile

wood, and examples in good condition are comparatively rare, but sometimes it is possible to come across heads in papier mâché and wood, miniature reproductions of the masks used in the dance-drama, and miracles of detail with their rich colouring and with thousands of tiny brilliants set in their pagoda-like head-dresses. Illustrated in Fig. III are three principal characters from the puppet version of the Ramayana, poetic legends adopted from India. Javanese and Balinese puppets are of two kinds, the Wayang Golek and the Wayang Purwa figures, the former being rod-puppets of unusual delicacy and charm, the latter being, for the most part, rather grotesque, flat, shadow puppets cut

from leather, and their intricate pierced-work patterns are covered with dyed skin so that details of costumes and features appear in jewel-like colours on the screen of the shadow-puppet theatre. Not only do these puppets cast brilliant shadows, but they themselves are elaborately coloured and gilded for the benefit of the menfolk in the audience who, being very superior to the women, do not sit on the opposite side of the screen to the puppet-showman, to watch the shadows, but sit on the same side to see how it is done, and so do not see the actual shadow play at all!

The Wayang Golek figures, one of which is illustrated in Fig. IV, are carved in wood. They have long, slender arms, abnormally thin waists, and features of an aristocratic dignity and aloofness, and are dressed in native batik. These creatures have inspired many puppeteers, and from them all forms of rod-puppets have sprung, but their influence was notably apparent in the work of the late Richard Teschner of Vienna, who produced an exotic species of fragile, unbelievably elegant rod-puppets magnificently costumed and

bejewelled, playing their parts within the shadowy depths of a glass-fronted stage, their slow, graceful movements accompanied by a soft musical-box tinkle. Such creations rank high as works of art, but, alas, they are completely inaccessible to the collector, as Teschner's entire collection now belongs to the Austrian nation.

To the collector of contemporary art the quest of a first-class modern puppet offers untold hazards and excitement, for most puppeteers are loath to part with their creations, and in any case puppets of outstanding artistic merit are comparatively few, but the acquisition of one provides a most delightful, unusual and comment-provoking decorative piece for the home. Fig. V illustrates a fine example of a glove-puppet by Mary Saunders, examples of whose work can be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Fig. VI a creation by Fred Schneckenburger of Switzerland, a controversial figure in present-day puppetry, some of whose surrealist puppets depart radically from all tradition and offer a challenge and a stimulus to the imagination.



Fig. VI. The puppet Pegasus of Guignols, a creation by Fred Schneckenburger of Switzerland.

# VIEWS and NEWS of ART in AMERICA

By  
PROFESSOR ERIK LARSEN,  
*Litt.D., M.A.*



Reproduced from a painting on canvas by JAN DAVIDSZ DE HEEM. Exhibited at James Graham & Sons exhibition in New York of small XVIIth-century Dutch Masters.

THE De Young Museum of San Francisco features this month a one-man exhibition of water-colours by the noted Bay artist, W. R. Cameron. It is to include thirty recent works portraying moods of San Francisco and environs, as well as places in Europe.

Cameron is a born New Yorker who moved to California at an early age and received his artistic instruction at the California College of Arts and Crafts. Now a nationally known water-colour painter and etcher, Cameron has also been a staff artist on the *San Francisco Chronicle* for many years. Curiously enough, a greater part of his achievements as a draughtsman and painter are being ascribed to the fact that he is also an able violinist. Cameron has been characterised as a master of delicate line and composition, with a happy faculty for suggesting the colour and atmosphere of place. He has exhibited widely in the United States and Europe. Among the many awards that he has won, the most recent is first prize for water-colour in the 1954 Vallejo Central Exhibition.

The same museum shows "Perceptions in Photography" by Peter Fink, who has been described as one of the younger photographers cultivating the field pioneered by Stieglitz and Cartier-Bresson. His approximately one hundred photographs of street scenes and portraits taken in Lisbon, Paris, Madrid, Amsterdam and other European cities prove that vivid moments can be caught and revealed with the camera in a way that had never previously been attempted. Fink's approach is often unexpected, being utterly devoid of artifices. M. P. Sonthonnax of the Paris publication *Photomonde*, which recently reproduced some of his photographs, characterises the designer-photographer as follows: "It is strange when looking through a collection of Peter Fink's photographs to realise that one is looking at prints made by a decorator. One might have expected careful compositions, thought out, built up with æsthetic formulæ, in which the inter-play of linear elements would be prominent. Or at least one might have expected a certain artistic choice of subject. Instead of this we find ourselves in the presence of a very pure use of the photographic medium as such. . . ." Fink is currently staying in San Francisco, where he photographs scenes for inclusion in a book on the city that is being written by Hector Escobosa.

When we hear of new museums being created in this country our expectation generally turns to a location in the south or in the west. This time, however, New England makes the news. A few short weeks ago yet another private museum, the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, opened its doors to the public. The foundation is situated in Williamstown, Mass., and will without any doubt most advantageously complement the extant facilities of Williams College. The white marble building is not yet fully equipped, and for the time being an exhibition of thirty-five paintings, seven bronzes and forty-one items of American, Dutch, English and French silver only are being shown to the public.

The Institute already possesses extensive collections of paintings, and will, as soon as more wall space is made ready, take its place among the more important smaller museums in

the country. Mr. Clark has been known as a discriminating collector for more than a quarter century; in fact, he is the famous "Mr. Anonymous" who used to participate in many major art shows of the 'thirties under this unassuming label. The current exhibit comprises an early and most astonishing Mary Cassat, "Torero and Girl," done in Sevilla in 1873, and strongly influenced by Manet's Spanish pieces. "Later," writes Professor S. Lane Faison, Jr. ". . . Miss Cassat moved into the orbit of Degas, and her art perhaps lost in power what it gained in subtlety and understatement. Still later, she turned overly sentimental." Other highlights of the show are seven paintings by Winslow Homer, from White Mountain views dating as early as 1868, to his late epical seascapes done at Prout's Neck. These are all chosen with the consummate taste of a collector, for whom the best is barely good enough. A compact and powerful "Portrait of an Unknown," by Degas, as well as four small bronzes of dancing nudes by the same artist, constitute more than attractive tokens of the museum's actual wealth in works by the master. The same holds true for Renoir, whose "M. Fournaise," dating from 1875, is but an appetiser foreshadowing other riches to come.

Mr. Clark did not confine himself to the acquisition of Impressionist canvases solely. The contemporary French academicians, such as Jean-Léon Gérôme, are faithfully represented side by side with them, and the whole period is topped off by an exceedingly fine Troyon—"Coming Storm." Among the earlier masters, Frans Hals' monochrome "Coal Heaver"—foreshadowing Goya's "Forge"—and through it the whole French School of the middle of the XIXth century, stands out for its flashy technique and Impressionistic approach. There are, furthermore, representative landscapes by Claude Lorrain and Jacob van Ruysdael, as well as an occasional excursion into the Flemish School—a richly decorative bust portrait of Ambrogio Spinola by Anthony van Dyck.

A further indication of the renewed favour enjoyed by the smaller Dutch Masters of the XVIIth century can be gathered from the *ensemble* currently on view at James Graham and Sons—a prominent New York art gallery. Among the twenty-three items exhibited, several were most representative and worthy to complete the collections of one or other of our provincial museums. My attention was especially caught by an important, signed, "Skating Scene," by Jan A. Beerstraeten, forthcoming from the Wilstach Collection. It must be one of the many excellent specimens recently sold by the Philadelphia Museum for lack of space. A small Cornelis Dusart, "The Bohemian Musicians," is of exquisite quality, and shows the artist in close imitation of Adriaen van Ostade. There is, further, a prominent classicist "Landscape with Diana and Acteon," by Poelenburgh, a most interesting allegorical panel by Berchem entitled "Spring," and a solid and typical signed "Pastoral Scene" by Wynants. A few decorative flower-pieces, one of them by Rachel Ruysch, and variegated still-life paintings, among them my favourite by Jan Davidsz De Heem (see illustration), round out a most satisfactory and highly encouraging exhibit.



Fig. I. Fluted rummers (left and right), with ovoid bowls and drawn stems. Centre, with ogee bowl and stuck stem. In each the lower stem has been expanded and tooled for attachment to the round foot. Collection Mr. O. T. Norris.

## GEORGIAN RUMMERS

BY G. BERNARD HUGHES

**F**ESTIVE, convivial occasions of Georgian days, calling for such long drinks as rumbo, rum shrub, rumfustion, and the like, were celebrated with those most massively handsome and decorative of glasses, Georgian rummers. But such vessels soon became the usual drinking glasses for mulled wines, cider, and so on where a capacious bowl was required. Engravings of the period illustrate rummers equally in connection with comfortable social occasions around the domestic fireside, in the tavern, and with rowdy hunting feasts. They do not appear to have been included in the lavishly cut 500-piece table services dating between about 1810 and 1830.

Rum, under its original name of rumbullion, had been a common drink in England from about 1640. The best quality was noted by Hughes in *Physitian*, 1672, as being "stronger than Spirits of Wine" and a drink composed of one part of rum to two parts of water reached a high place in popular favour. The officers of the Cromwellian army carried rum in their baggage, and throughout the XVIIIth century both navy and army issued rum to their men as a standard ration. In 1777, the Treasury paid John Blackburn

£9,062 18s. 6d. for "68,000 gallons of Rum from the Islands of Antigua, St. Kitts, Montserrat, and Nevis." This approximated half a crown a gallon.

It must be clearly understood by the beginner-collector that three entirely different glasses—different in style, in purpose, and in age—have come down to us under the name of rummer. These are: the English adaptation of the German roemer used for hock; the Georgian all-purpose drinking rummer; and the toddy rummer dealt with in "Punch and Toddy Glasses," *APOLLO*, dated December, 1953.

Georgian rummers with their capacious ovoid bowls and short stems follow a design which probably originated in Roman goblets of similar shape, and was copied by the glassmen of Elizabethan England. Fragments of domestic glass-ware were revealed by the Woodchester Glass-house, Gloucestershire, of which records exist to prove its operation early in the XVIIth century. When reconstructed by Mr. H. J. Powell these fragments formed goblets of the rummer type with ovoid bowls supported by trumpet-shaped blown pedestals, their rims strengthened by up-turned folds. Woodcuts of the early XVIIth century occasionally illustrate

Fig. II (left). Three-piece rummer with ovoid bowl, spool stem collared at top for attachment to bowl and expanded at the lower end for welding to the thick plain foot. C. 1800.

Courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum.

Fig. III. Drinking rummer with ovoid bowl; the thinly blown metal displays numerous striations. Typical tavern rummer of late XVIIIth and early IXth centuries. Collection Mrs. William Hopley.





Fig. IV (left). Three-piece rummer with ovoid bowl tooled with vertical flutes. C. 1810. Collection Mr. O. T. Norris.

Fig. V (right). Dated three-piece rummer, hemispherical bowl. Collection Mr. O. T. Norris.

similar goblets: by the mid-century short, straight stems and circular feet were depicted in association with ovoid bowls.

This form is not noted in flint-glass until the 1740s, when Marcellus Laroon recorded such a glass in his painting "The Dinner Party," now in the collection of Her Majesty the Queen. An invoice dated 1758 exists pricing "a pair of enamelled rummers" at two shillings. The earliest newspaper reference found by Buckley appeared in the *General Advertiser*, 1769, and this differentiates between rummers and punch glasses. Their production in large numbers was made commercially profitable only by the discovery that flint-glass twice annealed in a tunnel lehr was much tougher and stronger than any other transparent glass previously made.

The thinly blown bowls of early rummers were of generous proportions, ovoid with strongly curved sides, and supported by short drawn stems rising from plain round feet. They were satisfying to the eye and friendly to the hand. The short stem in such a two-piece rummer carried the centre of gravity near to the table, thus permitting the use of a relatively small foot at a time when glassmen were making long-stemmed drinking glasses with bowl and foot diameters approximately equal.

The two-piece rummer in Fig. III is typical of a style

made throughout the collectors' period. This specimen, with several others, came from the Cross Keys Tavern, Wednesfield Heath, Wolverhampton, where it is known to have been in use during the year 1800. Edward Giles, an ironmaster who owned the Cross Keys and its adjoining pawnshop in the 1840s, found the survivors, engraved his name on their bowls with a diamond ring, and carried them to his new house opposite, where they remained until 1940. The Cross Keys, in common with other contemporary taverns, also possessed a set of rummers bearing signatures of regular customers, diamond-engraved an inch below the rim, with the name of the tavern wheel-engraved in large capitals beneath.

Rummers with drawn stems in which the lower part of the ovoid bowl is hollow-fluted are perhaps the most numerous (Fig. I, left and right.) Early examples were hand-cut and polished on the wheel; later specimens were blown-moulded and fire-polished to give clean-cut edges to the flutes, which almost invariably numbered twelve. In some instances the fluting was continued from the bowl to the short stem, and both might be slightly spiralled. The entire surface of the bowl was sometimes fluted, but examples are now infrequent. Viewed from above, the lower part of the bowl displays a petalled flower effect, the plain circle of the stem top forming the stamens. The upper part of the bowl might be encircled with wheel-engraving in a wide range of simple motifs extending from one-quarter to half its depth.

The stem of the drawn rummer ended in an expanded, dome-shaped cyst. To this was welded the round foot, of a diameter approximately two-thirds that of the bowl. The majority of feet were flat, others slightly conical, but beneath a high proportion of the fluted rummers is a rough punty-mark, despite the fact that it was usual throughout the period for these disfigurements to be ground from drinking vessels.

The quality of the metal varies considerably in rummers. Those blown from the finer metal gathered from the top of the pot were almost unflawed, and in 1811 cost two shillings a pound at the glass-house; with square feet two shillings and two pence a pound. Those blown from tale metal, taken from the bottom of the pot, display considerable numbers of striae, cords and bubbles in the texture of the metal. These cost twopence a pound less and were often ill-proportioned with thick, clumsy feet.

The smaller drinking vessels shaped as rummers, but of a gill or less capacity, entered in glass-house catalogues as dobbins, were intended for gin or other spirits.

More costly was the rummer designed with a trumpet-shaped pedestal stem with downward folded foot of a diameter measuring no more than half that of the bowl rim.

Fig. VI (left). George IV coronation rummer, the date July 19th, 1821, is on reverse, with the king's cipher. Circa 1821. The engraving on the bucket bowl is of the King's Champion, armoured and plumed.

Fig. VII (right). Rummer commemorating the union of Great Britain and Ireland, 1801, and the opening of the Sunderland Bridge in 1796. On the reverse is engraved sprays of the rose, thistle and shamrock.

Both reproductions by courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum.



## GEORGIAN RUMMERS

Fig. VIII (left). Rummer with ovoid bowl with notched flutes, engraved with coat of arms in a cartouche of flowers and foliage. Pedestal stem and solid square foot. C. 1800. Collection Corning Museum.

Fig. IX (right). Rummer with cylindrical bowl, reinforced beneath and supported by a short plain stem rising from a terraced dome on a square foot, hollow and gadrooned. Bowl, wheel-engraved with London, York and Newcastle royal mail coach, No. 175, drawn by four horses; on the reverse a monogram with a Garter star.



These were blown from fine metal gathered from the piling pots. Such stems appear to have been unable to withstand the rough and tumble of frequent use, for few such fashionable rummers remain. They were illustrated on at least two glass-sellers' trade cards of the late XVIth century.

Three-piece drinking rummers, those in which bowl, stem and foot were shaped separately and welded into a single entity, date from the early 1780s. The ovoid bowl and round foot were connected by a short spool-shaped stem collared at the top for attachment to the bowl and expanded into a spreading dome at the lower end by which it was welded to a round foot, thick, plain and flat-surfaced. From about 1805 the underside might be star-cut, a feature more frequent after 1820.

Greater stability was given to ovoid bowl rummers from about 1790 by fitting heavy square feet, at first completely solid, then hollow beneath. The hollow reduced weight at a time when excise tax was at its highest. It was usually impressed with gadrooning, thus enriching the foot's appearance by refractive effects. The stem might consist of a cut and polished four-sided pedestal, or a moulded dome which might be terraced, resting on a square plinth, sometimes stepped. From about 1805 the underside of the solid square foot might be ornamented with a cut star.

Square feet were made in a piece with their pedestal or domed stem by a group of glassworkers known as pinchers. These men might be employed within the glass-house precincts, but more frequently they operated small furnaces of the old-fashioned type, measuring no more than six feet in height. Pinchers often worked clandestinely to avoid the excise duty levied on flint-glass. They supplied units consisting of feet and stems to the established glass-houses at cut prices, in metal inferior to that of the blown bowls: the contrast between the two metals on a single rummer is often evident. A square foot required trimming where the molten metal had escaped over the edge of the pincher's tool. This necessitates finishing on the grinding and polishing wheels. Round feet complete with short knopped stems were sometimes made by the pinchers.

Ovoid bowls began to be replaced during the 1790s by bowls in which the base tended to be flattened, such as the bucket-shaped bowl which usurped its popularity in best glass, and continued in production until the close of the rummer period; the cylindrical or straight-sided bucket; near hemispherical; barrel shape; and ogee forms. These bowls were almost invariably reinforced beneath by a strengthening disc with rounded or bladed edge, extending to more than half the diameter of the bowl base, and to which the stem is attached. These bowls shapes with round feet are all found on rummers issued in memory of Nelson,

and dated either October 21st, 1805, or January 6th, 1806, the date of his funeral at St. Paul's Churchyard. The sides of bucket bowls tended to take on a more pronounced slope from about 1815, and the lower part might be encircled with flat-cut or hollow flutes. Ovoid and ogee bowls decorated with twelve flutes, as on drawn rummers, appear also on three-piece rummers.

The short, thick stem, seldom measuring as much as two inches in length, allowed little scope for variation in design: it might be plainly cylindrical, spool-shaped, knopped, or knopped and cut. The earliest knops were in the form of centrally placed flattened balls, a type which continued throughout the period: from about 1805 such knops might be all-over facet-cut with small diamonds. Early in the XIXth century came the annular knop, followed by the bladed knop, and still later by the triple knop.

The boldly curved bowl-surface of the finer rummers formed an excellent field for wheel-engraved ornament, often of exceptionally skilful craftsmanship. Pictorial decoration was particularly favoured. The scenes depicted might have personal significance, or might commemorate some royal, historical, political, or social event. Portraits of naval and military heroes were frequent, whilst nautical, coaching, and sporting scenes such as fox-hunting, racing, hare coursing, cock-fighting and the like were highly popular. Other rummers were engraved with elaborate cartouches enclosing coats of arms, crests, cyphers or initials.



### ARTISTS ABOUT ARTISTS. CRUX CRITICORUM

MICHELANGELO (speaking in 1513 of an early work—now lost—by PONTORMO):

"If he lives and continues on this path, Pontormo will carry painting to heavenly heights."

GIORGIO VASARI (1511-74), wrote most of all. His volumes cannot be condensed here—but at least it should be said of this painter-writer that, in a Mannerist period, he found good to say of painters as different as Giotto and Titian, as Fra Angelico and Salviati.

WILLIAM BLAKE: "To My Eye Rubens' colouring is most contemptible . . . Rubens and the Venetians are Opposite in everything to True Art and they Meant to be so; they were hired for this purpose."

"Having spent the Vigour of my Youth and Genius under the oppression of Sir Joshua and his Gang of Cunning Hired Knaves . . ."

"Till we get rid of Titian and Correggio, Rubens and Rembrandt, We shall never equal Rafael and Albert Duerer, Michael Angelo and Julio Romano."

# CERAMIC CAUSERIE

## A SUMMER NOTE

RECENT months have been remarkable for the sustained high prices realised at auction by all types of rare porcelain. It would seem that those pieces for which there is a keen (and widespread) demand are valued without limit. Perhaps more memorable than the records in the sale rooms has been the welcome return of summer—fast in danger of becoming no more than the name of one of the seasons in a set of china figures.

A hot summer is no prerogative of 1955; such a phenomena was not unknown two centuries ago. A dealer of that time offered every inducement to escape the heat of the sun and, at the same time, view his collection of porcelain. His advertisement ran:

AT WILLIAMS'S Cool Retreat, formerly Oliver Cromwell's Palace, facing Craig's Court, Charing-cross, being remarkably cooler than most Houses in London. There will be sold by Hand, a few Days longer, all the Remainder of his large Collection of Foreign China, with several new Chinese Curiosities never before exposed to Sale; with great Variety of India Japan Dressing-Boxes in compleat and other Sets; Japan Dressing Glasses, and a large Quantity of new-fashion'd Fans; there is also the greatest Variety of the Derby Porcelain or second Dresden Figures, Baskets, Leaves, &c. and several curious Pieces for Deserts, all mark'd by the Proprietor's Orders at the lowest Prices, with good Allowance to Dealers; several of the said Goods will be sold under prime Cost, rather than risque the moving; for Conveniency of Gentlemen and Ladies Carriages, the Door will be open'd in Spring-Gardens.

Two paragraphs relating to a china sale at Oliver Cromwell's Palace in May, 1757, are reprinted in J. E. Nightingale's *Contributions towards the History of Early English Porcelain* (1881) on page lxix, but the announcement above would seem to follow a further notice of April 6th, 1758, issued by Williams in the *Public Advertiser*. The original from which it is copied for inclusion in these columns is an undated and unnamed cutting.

## SOME PAST COLLECTORS—OCTAVIUS MORGAN, M.P., F.R.S., F.S.A. (1803-88)

Charles Octavius Swinnerton Morgan was born in 1803, a brother of the first Lord Tredegar. He was Member of Parliament for the county of Monmouthshire for thirty-three years. Visitors to the King Edward VII Gallery at the British Museum cannot fail to see and hear the tall gilt-cased chiming and mechanical clock by Isaac Harbrecht, bequeathed by Mr. Morgan. It is for his fine collection of early clocks and watches that his name is remembered by many people, but, in addition, he is deserving of fame as the first man to study seriously the hall-marks and history of old English silver. Morgan's *Table of the Annual Assay Office Letters* was published in 1853, and all later students of the subject are indebted to him for his pioneer work in the field.

Octavius Morgan's wide interests embraced also ceramics. Marryatt, in his *Pottery and Porcelain*, notes his possession of some good Italian majolica, and in an appendix of prominent collectors lists his interests as "miscellaneous." An interesting photograph, taken towards the end of last century, shows a corner of Morgan's drawing-room at The Friars, Newport, Monmouthshire. It is reproduced on the opposite page by kind permission of Miss B. J. Acton, a direct descendant.

The photograph shows a heavily curtained, dark-walled

room that is packed with furniture, every piece of which is crowded in turn with Oriental and European china, books, clocks and bric-à-brac in general. It is a happy bachelor confusion, amongst which its owner lived until he reached the age of eighty-five.

## BENJAMIN LUND

The name of Benjamin Lund has sprung into prominence during the last few years. William Lowdin, whose defunct glass-house in Redcliff Backs, Bristol, lent a temporary name to the porcelain works that annexed the premises, is no longer mentioned; he has served his purpose. The British Museum is in the van of those who have hurriedly re-labelled their specimens at the earnest and repeated behest of Mr. A. J. Toppin. It was he who brought to light the proceedings relating to the bankruptcy of Josiah Holdship of Worcester, now in the Public Record Office, and who has shown the important part played by Lund in the commencement of the Worcester works.

Although it is quite fair that Benjamin Lund should receive all the credit to which he is due, is it entirely correct that we should refer to "Lund's" instead of "Lowdin's" Bristol? After all, there seems to be little doubt that Lund came from outside the district and that he had worked earlier as far away as Limehouse, and we have the contemporary record of Dr. Pocock that the works was carried on at "Lowdin's Glasshouse." Is it not most probable that at the time of the actual manufacture the product was known locally by the earlier-established name of the building whence it came—Lowdin's?

As yet there is no knowledge of Lund's ancestry, although publication is promised in the future of some facts under that head. In the meantime, a bill for the supply of china, reprinted below, is not without interest. The James Lund who was in partnership with Lluellin Aspley may or may not have been a forebear of Benjamin Lund, but the fact that two men bearing the same surname were connected with the china trade within the space of a half-century is at least provocative. Sir John Newton, Bart., to whom the bill is made out, had a town house in Soho Square between 1700 and 1730, and his country residence was Barr's Court, Gloucestershire. The bill is printed in *Soho and its Associations*, by E. F. Rimbault and G. Clinch, published in 1895.

Sir John Newton,

Bought of James Lund and Lluellin Aspley at the Crane in the Poultry.

March 29, 1701.

	£	s.	d.
1 pair of fine china Jars, painted with gold	1	6	0
1 pair of blew china rowlwaggons	1	8	0
4 china chocolet cups and 4 saucers in colors		13	4
2 ditto chocolet cups and 2 saucers		8	0
4 small china bottles		3	0
1 china teapot		3	0
3 pair of bottles, and 3 faulty cups		2	6
12 delf saucers		4	0

1 pair of small bottles, with gold	4	7	10
9 faulty chocolet and tea cups, in colors		2	6
		3	0

Agreed to abate of the upper percell	4	13	4
		2	10
	4	10	6

GEOFFREY WILLS.

NOTE: Correspondence is invited upon any subject of ceramic interest. Letters should be addressed to The Editor, APOLLO Magazine, 10, Vigo Street, London, W.1.

## VICTORIANA

A corner of Octavius Morgan's drawing-room at The Friars, Newport, Mon., home of the famous collector. Some brief notes about him appear in "Ceramic Causerie" on the opposite page. The illustration is by courtesy of Miss B. J. Acton, a direct descendant.



## Correspondence

### WEDGWOOD CAMEO MADE FROM AUSTRALIAN MATERIAL

Sir,—This illustration is taken from a print in *The Botanic Garden*, a book published in London in 1794. A note at the foot of the page opposite to the print states that it depicts a cameo of Mr. Wedgwood's manufacture, showing "Hope attended by Peace, and Art, and Labour; which was made of clay from Botany Bay, to which place he sent many of



them to show the inhabitants what their materials would do, and to encourage their industry."

It may be that examples of this cameo survive in private possession in Australia, and that their recognition would be of interest to your readers in that country.

I surmise that Sir Joseph Banks was concerned in this venture, knowing the interest he took in the early free settlement of Australia, and recalling the cameo portrait of him made by Wedgwood of the same clay.

H. J. S. BANKS, Commander R.N.

### veneers

Dear Sir,—I have been doing a bit of repair and restoration of furniture in recent years—mostly simple oak and mahogany pieces. I am now more ambitious and taking on veneered pieces.

The problem faces me of finding small quantities of the less common woods, and also mahogany veneers of just the right thickness, boxwood strips, etc. Is there somewhere where these can be bought, as I cannot imagine that dealers who repair furniture cut their own veneers?

F. HUGHES.

Modern veneers are cut on a guillotine and vary in thickness from 0.65 mm. to 1 mm. The old veneers used on antique furniture were cut with a saw and are at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. thick. Some

of the really early ones are  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. thick. For repair work there is no short cut and the only way to create the strips is with a fine saw. There are no shops selling them, although some of the professional restorers no doubt make batches for their own use. There is nothing for it but to saw your own veneers from the solid timber.

### SILVER GILT SALVER BY FREDERICK KANDLER

The salver is one of a pair made in the reign of George III, the other has been purchased by the Victoria and Albert Museum. The salvers represent the Adam period of English silver at its best. The Kandler family, of which Frederick was a member, were of German origin, and produced silver of the finest quality in design and workmanship equal to anything else made in England during the XVIIIth century.

The salvers were auctioned at Christie's in March this year, and destined for export to Italy. The Association of the Friends of the Birmingham Art Gallery and the Victoria and Albert Museum decided to purchase the salvers if the export licence could be stopped. In June, the matter was brought before the Treasury Committee, the function of which is to prevent works of art of national importance from leaving this country, and it was decided that they should remain in England, and that the two bodies concerned should be allowed to purchase them. One has now been presented to the City of Birmingham Art Gallery by the Association of the Friends of the Gallery.

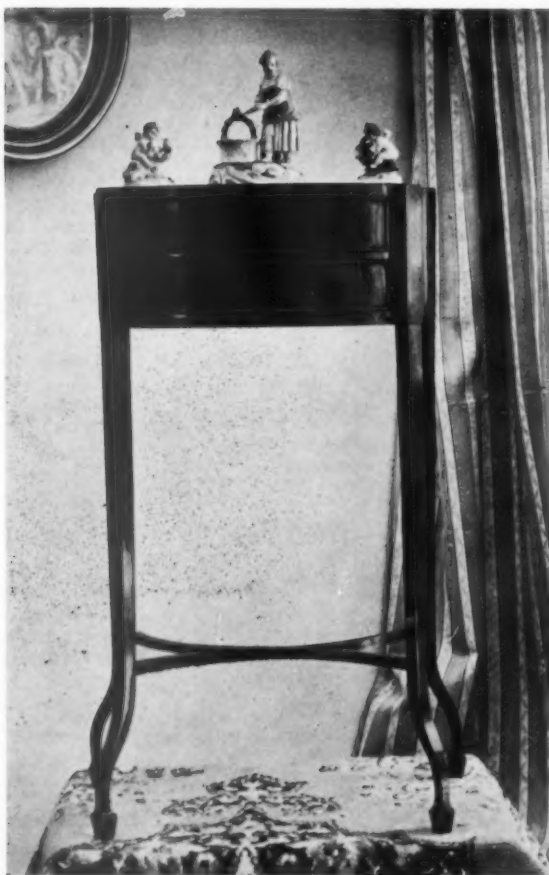


## FIFTH AUTUMN ANTIQUES FAIR, CHELSEA



Fig. I. Self-portrait by Franz Hals.  
Loan exhibit by the Duke of Bedford.

Fig. II. A small mahogany occasional table.  
Eileen Hoare, Stand No. 32.



THE organisers of the Fifth Autumn Antiques Fair at Chelsea announce that the exhibits will be very varied, and will be suitable for all tastes, both expensive and modest, with the emphasis on the unusual, and it is to the unusual that one's attention is particularly drawn to the loan exhibits of His Grace the Duke of Bedford, who, accompanied by Her Grace the Duchess, will open the Fair at the Chelsea Town Hall, at 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 28th next.

Amongst the loan exhibits of the Duke's is a walking stick which belonged to Charles I. It is not known how or when it came into the possession of William, the fifth Earl of Bedford, who became the first Duke of Bedford, although it has been related that it was presented to him when the King was on the scaffold in Whitehall. The stick is inscribed CAROLUS REX 1632. *Dieu et mon droit*. Other loans from Woburn Abbey are four small drawings by Queen Victoria, a self-portrait by Rembrandt, a self-portrait by Franz Hals and a Gainsborough portrait of Gertrude Leveson Gower, Duchess of Bedford.

Exhibitors at the Fair include fine art dealers from London and the provinces, from Scotland to Hampshire. The Chelsea Town Hall, where the exhibition is being held, is in the King's Road, accessible to visitors from all parts. The Councillors of the Borough of Chelsea have allowed the exhibition to be housed in the Council Chamber, the very first time that this room has been used for any purpose other than the deliberations of the Council.

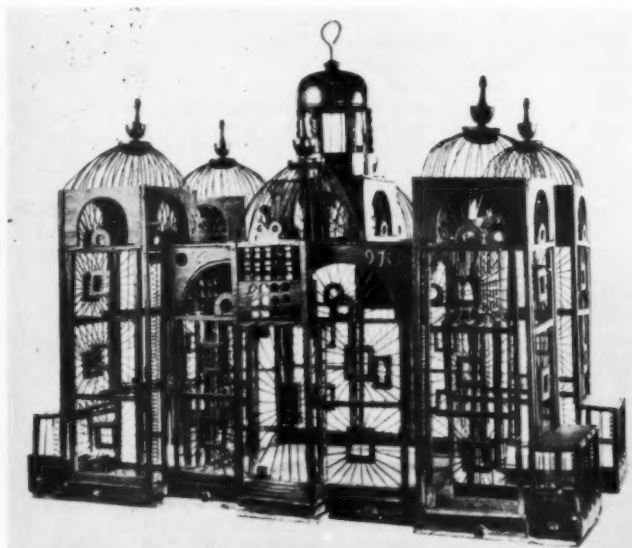
The Fair is open daily from 11 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. (excepting Sundays) from September 28th until October 8th.

It is significant that the Fair has shown progression from its inception, and once again the space for exhibitors and visitors has been enlarged, this time by a third, in expectation of an increased attendance at the fifth and better-than-ever Fair.

As one has come to expect that the outstanding concern of the committee is that all pieces on sale shall be genuine antiques and dating not later than 1851, the committee have the onerous task of examining all the pieces exhibited and putting them to the rigid test of genuineness; without that *cachet* there is no room in the Fair.

On this and the following pages are illustrated a representative selection of the exhibits on sale.

Fig. III. Well-preserved William and Mary bird cage; incised date 1697.  
Typical of specimens seen in contemporary paintings and prints.  
Beckwith & Son, Stand Nos. 3 and 23.



# FIFTH AUTUMN ANTIQUES FAIR, CHELSEA



Fig. IV. 18 carat gold Georgian Box, superbly worked with classical panels. Weight 13 oz. Brigadier Lake, Trolly Hall. Stand No. 40.

Fig. V. Early XVIIIth century painting. Dutch interior. Josephine Grahame-Ballin, Stand Nos. 37 and 38.



Fig. VI. Pair of Louis XV walnut chairs. J. B. Cresson. Directoire clock of white marble, bronze and bronze d'ore. Mahogany Chippendale eagle bracket. Michael Inchbald, Ltd., Stand No. 41.



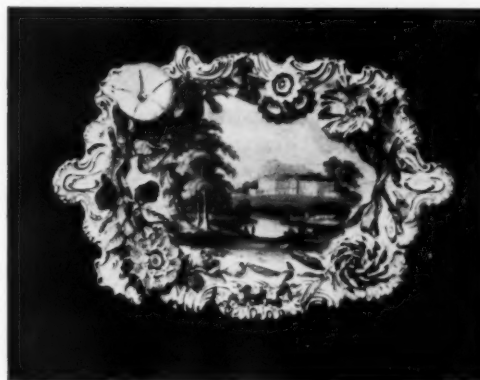
Fig. VII. Salt glaze teapot in brilliant colours. Leonard of Liverpool. Stand No. 17.



Fig. VIII. Meissen conductor. Geoffrey Van, Stand No. 19.



Fig. IX. Chamberlain Worcester Dish, decorated with applied flowers. T. E. Gascoigne, Stand No. 7.



Messrs. Hod Dibben & Edwards, Stand No. 31, specialise in antique office furniture and office interior decoration. They are exhibiting Chippendale pedestal desks, break-front Chippendale and Adam bookcases and a typical office suite.

Fig. X. One of a pair of small bookcases in rosewood. Thomas Hope period. Ian Askew, Stand Nos. 30 and 33.



Fig. XI. A map of Africa. Baynton-Williams (Maps), Ltd., Stand No. 4.



Fig. XII. A finely carved gilt state chair made for Napoleon I surmounted with his armorial bearings. Brompton Furniture Galleries, Stand No. 9.



Fig. XIII. A selection of rare transfer and lustre jugs. Dunning's Antiques, Stand No. 5.

Fig. XIV. Worcester Mug, circa 1810, height 5 in. Margaret Steven, Stand No. 20.



Fig. XV. A pair of Portobello "Piggy Banks," a Portobello specimen dish and a Mauchline Snuff Box dated 1823. Sybil Stuart, Stand No. 34.



Fig. XVI. Small Regency bonheur-du-jour. Alexander Podd & Son, Stand Nos. 2 and 22.



### The Fifth Northern Antique Dealers' Fair

This will be held as usual in the Royal Hall at Harrogate and will be open from September 12th to 17th.

# THE LIBRARY SHELF

## On The Songs of Innocence

BY GEORGE WINGFIELD DIGBY

THIS is a colour facsimile of an early copy of the *Songs*,\* dating from about 1790 (the original plates were etched in 1789, when Blake was aged thirty-two). The quality of the reproductions, in colour and texture, is superb, and in sponsoring this edition (which has been reproduced by collotype and stencil processes in Paris), the Blake Trust has rendered one more service to all lovers and students of Blake.

There is no doubt that the beauty of the *Songs of Innocence* can only be fully experienced in their original setting, that is when seen amidst the pictorial fantasies with which Blake surrounded each poem. In certain poems the pictorial images which illustrate them are of paramount importance to their understanding. To handle such a faithful facsimile edition as this is almost as good as to possess an original copy. With this in hand, there is nothing to hinder one receiving and flavouring the subtlest meaning hidden in these poems, which is so often enhanced and indeed partly conveyed by the accompanying design.

However simple or naïve these poems may appear, they are, in fact, pregnant with meaning on many different levels. Some of them proclaim essential truths so directly, and so forcibly, that it is difficult to find their like apart from the sayings of Jesus in the Gospels. For example, "On Another's Sorrow" makes a statement about sympathy and suffering which philosophers and men of the world alike would regard as mere twaddle. Jesus said the same (about God's cognisance of the fall of a sparrow and the hairs of the head being all numbered), and obviously such statements are less naïve than they appear at first sight. This is also true of "A Dream," and "The Chimney Sweeper"; these poems are either expressions of mere sentimentality, or they hint at some hidden spiritual truth or metaphysical principle. They carry the conviction of the latter.

In "The School Boy" Blake says that a true human being can only grow and develop through freedom and happiness. Most educators nowadays would agree with this; but how far is this possible in the competitive, commercial civilisation we have created, and is it any better in our day than it was in Blake's? This, and many others of the *Songs*, express fundamental tenets professed by our cultural traditions, but they are those which, in fact, are furthest from actuality. Simple as they may appear, these poems express hard and difficult truths, and they are as necessary to listen to to-day as they were one hundred and fifty years ago.

There are four poems whose meanings are of archetypal significance. Two of them, "The Little Girl Lost," and "The Little Girl Found," refer to the principle of the female finding realisation only by means of the abandonment and sacrifice of herself. This is a widespread theme in mythology. In these poems it is clear that this is not only conceived as applying on a physical, sexual level, but also on a psychological and spiritual one. In Blake's poems it is not only the little girl who undergoes this fate, but also the parents; they, too, experience the meeting with the lion and his metamorphosis into a guardian angel. It is, clearly, a process of psychological maturity to which the poems refer. Anyone who has studied Jungian psychology will recognise at once the archetypal symbols which recur in such perennial myths as the riddle of the sphinx, the swallowing of the hero by the dragon, or sea monster, and the night journey in the sea. Particularly significant in pointing to the deeper psychological meaning contained in these two poems are the pictures which accompany them. In the first, a nude man embraces a female who points upwards, and there is a serpent. In the second, the picture is dominated by the huge twisted stem of a tree, a symbol of mature human achievement which is in accord with "the vine of eternity" (see creeper on left side of picture).

"The Little Boy Lost" and "The Little Boy Found" refer

to the masculine principle and the Apollonian ideal of individuation. Here the dominant images are those of "light" and "whiteness." Individuation has its trials, its dangers, its despairs; but this principle, too, if followed with devotion, leads to unity and reconciliation. These two pairs of poems are complementary to one another, in the same sense as are the masculine and feminine principles, when understood as psychological values.

The poem "Infant Joy" is so slight that its meaning is hardly conveyed without the pictorial image which accompanies it. A flower, a "lily of the field," is the symbol of the unlaboured beauty of life—fragile, evanescent, yet perennially brought to birth by life itself. It is the same with joy, with happiness; it cannot be contrived or created, it must spring from life itself. "The Blossom" hints at a related theme. Happiness, the flowering of life, is a central experience; it is innocent, and something which cannot be won or achieved. It is a complete and unitive experience beyond the reach of the happy sparrow or the sad robin; it only exists where these opposites no longer have the power to tear it apart. But how are the opposites, once divided by consciousness, to be re-united? The poem "Night" attempts to answer this problem. But how far is Blake's lyrical statement about this intelligible? Is it more, or less, comprehensible than the long pages devoted to this theme in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," in "Milton," and "Jerusalem"? Whatever the answer may be, the quality of Blake's insight and the marvellous powers of his artistic and poetic gifts are shown in his ability to make the simplest, as well as the most complex and extended statements, about fundamentals.

\* Blake's *Songs of Innocence*. The Trianon Press. 6 guineas.

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## EARLY CONVERSATION PICTURES.

By RALPH EDWARDS. Country Life Ltd. 42s.

The "Conversation Piece" may be described as that distinct form of group portraiture which represents people in their relationship to their circumstances and environment. This involves the delineation not only of a man's features but of the man set against all those adjuncts which describe him, including his family ties, his occupational interests, and any other allusive factors that have a bearing upon his social status and character. Thus we generally find the "Conversation Piece" illustrating not only the physical aspect of the man but his wife, his entire family, his pets, his hobby, and anything else that throws light upon his tastes, affections and personality.

It is still commonly supposed that Hogarth and his contemporaries were responsible for inaugurating the vogue for the "Conversation Piece" in England; but Mr. Ralph Edwards corrects this impression by pointing out that Hogarth's works in this genre are, in fact, relatively late examples of this type of painting, long very popular and widely distributed, which in its turn owed much to Continental inspiration.

As would be expected, Mr. Edwards approaches his subject with the experience of a highly skilled scholar and research student; and his book, within its self-imposed limits, gives us a fully detailed and documented picture of a period which concludes within a year or two of 1730. He explains that he has deliberately not gone beyond this date because "by then small-scale informal portraiture in the Low Countries, where it originated, had long passed the meridian, while in England the art was just becoming firmly established in favour, and Hogarth, its leading exponent in the early phase, was then turning his attention to other forms of painting."

Although the scholarly pedant will find his passion for exactitude in documentation and reference fully satisfied, the more liberal-minded reader will find Mr. Edwards' attitude singularly fresh and stimulating. For his book also claims the attention of a far wider public by virtue of his just assessment of the qualities and attributes of the "Conversation Piece" as a specialised art-form. "We shall not," he writes frankly, "expect in it the qualities and attributes of great imaginative art," because any original inventive power the artist in this genre may have possessed has been largely curtailed by the requirements of those literary and representational elements that were required to be incorporated in these pictures. The persistent emphasis was on social relationships, personal accomplishments, and worldly success, and it is therefore not surprising that there was not much scope left over for even the most gifted painter to do more than carry out his patron's wishes to the letter. If, therefore, from a strict aesthetic standpoint, as Mr. Edwards himself admits, the art of the "Conversation Piece" is adventitious and impure, nevertheless it retains a human fascination for those content to accept uncritically the facts of the comfortable domestic life of a social class completely satisfied in its world of enthroned privilege and unthreatened security, a world in which

everything sordid and painful is left out.

The book includes ninety-five well-chosen and for the most part, well-reproduced "Conversation Pieces" in public and private collections, together with full notes about the artists (when known) and a wealth of other information.

VICTOR RIENAECKER.

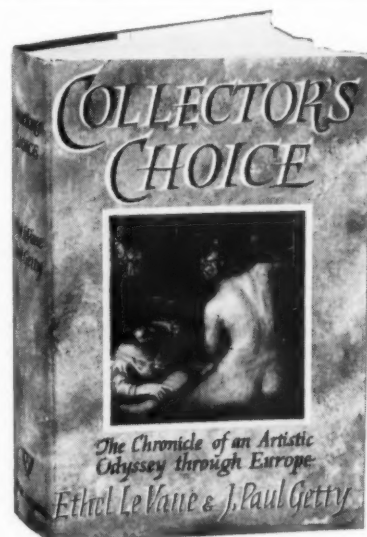
## THE SCULPTURE OF THE HELLENISTIC AGE. By MARGARETE BIBER.

Oxford University Press. £7.

A really full book on Hellenistic sculpture, embodying recent additions to our knowledge, both from research and from excavation, is long overdue, and Professor Bieber is to be congratulated on bringing to fruition a long and laborious task.

The author starts with an introduction, in which she explains the meaning of the term Hellenistic, and continues with a full account of the art of the IVth century, out of which grew Hellenistic art. The theme itself is ably developed under nine headings: Lysippus and the early Hellenistic age; Atticism in the late IVth and early IIIrd centuries B.C.; Asianism in the IIIrd century B.C.; The art of Alexandria; The art of Priene; The art of Pergamon; Rhodes and the south-west of Asia Minor; Rococo trends in Hellenistic art; and Classicism in the IInd and Ist centuries B.C. Finally, there is a chronological list of historical facts and dated monuments which will be of inestimable value, and a useful bibliography.

The author's general conclusions are convincing. The illustrations are full, and bring out clearly enough the points made in the text, but the reproduction



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## THE LIBRARY SHELF

(in collotype) leaves much to be desired; in many cases far less than justice is done to the subjects.

Professor Bieber gives full and up-to-date reference to sources both ancient and modern, and this will be a boon to students. A reference, however, ought surely to have been made, if only in a postscript, to the recent American excavations at Samothrace, which have established the date of the Victory at about 200 B.C.

The attribution of sculptures to artists (frequently on little or no evidence) is a game too often played by archaeologists, and we cannot hold Professor Bieber entirely guiltless on this count. It might be as well to recall the salutary shock to the academic world when the Delphic Charioteer turned out to have been made by a hitherto unknown artist from (of all places) Boeotia.

It is a pity that a great work such as this should be marred by a number of minor inaccuracies. To cite a few examples: on p. 9, in connection with the stele of Hegeso, we are told "the father certainly wanted the artist to make of his daughter, who had died in early youth, an image which portrayed her beauty, dignity and grace." In fact, we do not know who ordered the tombstone, nor do we know anything about Hegeso's age at death, nor about her personal appearance. On p. 15 we read, in two successive sentences, first that Praxiteles was the son of Kephisodotos; secondly, that he was probably the son and pupil of Kephisodotos. On p. 27 the Rhodian knights are said to have taken possession

of and demolished the Mausoleum to build up their castle in Rhodes. Surely Budrum is meant?

Of the terra-cottas, a number used to illustrate the art of the IVth century almost certainly belong to the IInd. That illustrated in Fig. 645 is a forgery.

R. A. HIGGINS.

**AN ÆSTHETIC APPROACH TO BYZANTINE ART.** By P. A. MICHELIS. Batsford. 30s.

Those of us who have been enraptured by the star-sprinkled dome of the Mausoleum of Gallas Placidia, have turned over in our hands a Byzantine ivory pyxis, or have been overwhelmed by the Pantocrator at Cefalu do not need to have the great and original achievements of Byzantine art pointed out to us. But for too long has it been overlooked or derided by Germanic and Anglo-Saxon taste, and even to-day, after the patient work over two generations of a small group of dedicated scholars, Byzantine art is still frequently underestimated or misunderstood by those who should know better. The Englishman, with his love of the delicate tracery of the fan-vaulting of so many of his cathedrals and his obstinate respect for Victorian railway-Gothic, has been slow to appreciate an art that at first glance appears to ignore rules governing the styles with which he is acquainted, and apparently contravenes all the principles of classic proportion, and lacks the, for him, all-important sanction of repetition in an everyday context.

Writing in 1932, Steven Runciman, the greatest of living Byzantinists, noted: "In a few years we shall be better able to estimate how vast a debt the world of beauty owes to the artists of Byzantium," and because it contributes towards this end, Prof. Michelis's book is to be most warmly welcomed. Despite our initial qualms after reading Sir Herbert Read's introduction, this is, in fact, a thought-provoking volume; particular paragraphs, sentences and even phrases are richly illuminating, and it contains flashes of remarkable insight. But having said this, one must introduce a qualification, for the author's method of approach and his basic proposition are open to serious criticism.

Prof. Michelis suggests that the whole history of art can be explained in terms of the interplay of two basic conceptions which permeate the art of any given period, and which he designates by the words "sublime" and "beautiful." And according to him classic art is beautiful, while Byzantine art is an expression of the sublime. In the course of the development of this thesis he does much to enhance our appreciation and clarify our understanding not only of Byzantine art but also of other periods. Yet there is a fatal weakness. For this is the sort of universalising theory that will not recommend itself to careful scholars. The means by which mankind in any particular period has expressed its noblest aspirations, and has given form to its wonder at the beauty and ordering of the world are too varied and complex to be designated by a single word. This, then, is a book that presents a formidable array of facts, and will stimulate further thought. But we still await the book on the æsthetics of Byzantine art.

TERENCE MULLALLY.

91



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**NORWEGIAN TAPESTRY-WEAVING, 1550-1800.** By THOR B. KIELLAND. Vol. I-III. Gyldendal Norsk Forlag. Text in Norwegian, with an English Summary.

In a truly sumptuous publication, Dr. Thor B. Kielland, who is Director of the Arts and Crafts Museum of Oslo, has given us the strange history of the Norwegian peasant tapestries. These extraordinary products, with their weird mixture of primitivism and refinement, stand strangely apart from the contemporary style of tapestry-weaving elsewhere in Europe, while they represent one of the highpoints in the development of Norwegian textile art.

The fragments of IXth-century tapestries discovered in the famous excavations at Oseberg have shown that a textile tradition of figure compositions was well established at the Viking courts of southern Norway, and the XIIth-century frieze, representing the twelve months of the year, of which a part was discovered in the little church at Baldishol at the end of last century, is one of the very few existing examples in Europe of tapestry-weaving in the Romanesque style. That no Norwegian tapestries have survived from Gothic times is surprising and very much to be regretted, as this period produced so many excellent works in the other arts and crafts. But from the Renaissance onwards the development can be closely followed in a group of tall panels, where medieval technical traditions struggle somewhat uneasily to come to terms with the new ideas of colour and composition



A Foolish Virgin. Detail of tapestry in Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo.

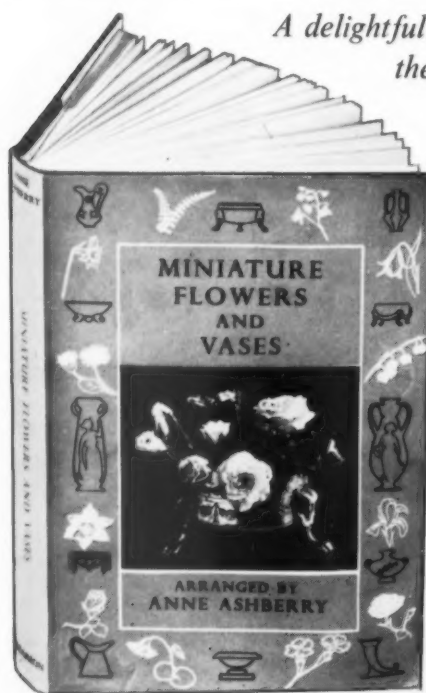
inspired from the great Flemish weaving centres. The next and more interesting stage of development is represented by the panels which originated in the XVIIth century in the prosperous valley of Gudbrandsdalen, and which Dr. Kielland has described in the second and most important volume of his work. (The first, which appeared last year, deals with the

Renaissance tapestries, while the third, on tapestry-weaving for utility purposes, is promised us for next year.)

At first glance the Gudbrandsdalen tapestries seem to have no connection at all with the great European weaving tradition of their period. Here are no sweeping composition schemes, no clever use of shaded colours, no three-dimensional figures or airy background vistas. The Norwegian tapestries bear more likeness to mosaic or medieval stained glass; the panels are usually divided into a complicated system of different scenes; the stiff and stately figures stand flat against the richly detailed but equally flat background; and clear and contrasting colours are set off against each other with primitive force. The subjects are mostly biblical, and particularly popular are the Seven Wise and the Seven Foolish Virgins and the Adoration of the Magi, which were repeated in Norwegian country workshops over more than a century. The cartoons on which the earliest versions were based were provided by the anonymous masters of charming, but unsophisticated paintings in oil on canvas, still to be seen in Norwegian country churches.

The book is copiously illustrated. Several of the colour reproductions show details and appear in almost natural size and give most satisfying impressions of texture and colour effects. Examples of Gudbrandsdalen tapestries can be studied in this country in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, and in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.

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COVENT GARDEN

## THE LIBRARY SHELF

**OLD SHEFFIELD PLATE.** By EDWARD WENHAM. G. Bell & Sons. 18s. 6d.

In 1912 Frederick Bradbury published his *History of Old Sheffield Plate*. He had had the advantage of belonging to a family firm which dated from the hey-day of Sheffield plate, and although at the time at which he wrote the industry was to all intents extinct, he had known the craftsmen who had worked in it in its latter days. Bradbury said all that there was to be said on the subject, but for some obscure reason his book was never reprinted and is now a rarity. Doubtless a substitute book would have soon appeared if the fashion for collecting Sheffield plate had not declined after the first world war. However, a new handbook was long overdue when Seymour Wyley in 1949 published in New York his *Book of Sheffield Plate*.

It would be impossible to write a book on this subject without drawing largely upon the information provided by Bradbury, so that the success of the author depends on his ability to handle his authority. Mr. Wenham has told his story very clearly and with proper understanding of the technical details. At the end he has included a chapter on that Cinderella of collector's subjects—britannia metal. The weak point of the book is that the author has depended too much on line blocks. The twenty half-tone plates illustrate a rather too large proportion of the later and more complicated pieces, whereas the golden age of Sheffield plate was during the Adam period. Anyone taking up the subject seriously would therefore do well to supplement this work with the new picture booklet published recently by the Victoria and Albert Museum. C. C. OMAN.

**THE IMAGERY OF BRITISH CHURCHES.** By M. D. ANDERSON. Murray. 1955. 25s.

Like the author's *Looking for History in British Churches*, the present volume is, above all, readable. We do not mean by this to suggest that the author has written down to her public, but rather that she has presented a mass of material in a vivid and arresting manner. After dealing with the different approach to the subject by the parson, the craftsman and the parishioner, the rich field of imagery is itself discussed in considerable detail. Some of the possible places—in or outside of the church—where it can be found are

listed on page 39, though why that very prolific source of art—the roof—is omitted from this catalogue is difficult to explain. But the material which can inspire imagery is so vast that the medieval artist or craftsman could never have been short of a subject for the display of his art.

Not only does the author clearly love her subject but such love has most generously turned to the benefit of Mother Church herself, for all proceeds of the sale of this book have been dedicated to the Historical Churches Preservation Trust—a gesture we hope all readers will appreciate. Wide reading is expressed in the appendices and the most exhaustive bibliography, and the illustrations are well reproduced. These, alas, are packed at one end of the book—as far away from the relevant text as possible—and are not all unhackneyed. Those of stained glass have been reproduced many times previously, and we should have preferred something less well known. This is, however, perhaps a personal desire; in any case, it does not detract from the book's status. Everyone should read it, and all should be the better for so doing.

H. T. KIRBY.

**THE MIND AND WORK OF PAUL KLEE.** By WERNER HAFTMANN. Faber. 30s.

The artist's obscurity is the art critic's opportunity. Now that the painter may concern himself with expressing his private vision of the world about him, or even of the world within him, there need be no end to the number of books of exegesis. None of them need agree, moreover, because interpretation can be as subjective as the art itself. They tend to become ingenious exercises in probability, and have all the fascination of detective fiction without its opprobrium.

Paul Klee, that paramount exponent of the private in art, is an exhaustible subject for these writings. Three more have recently been published, and of these Dr. Werner Haftmann has certainly contributed some likely solutions in the game of guessing what Klee's subtle mind was at during the successive stages of his career. He allows Klee himself to emerge as a personality as well as an artist, and follows clues in his utterances and his environment to account for individual paintings, drawings and methods of expression. Sometimes in a "re-cap." of amazing ingenuity a picture is analysed to show how

consistent it all is, what lost threads really lead from the African visit to Weimar or Switzerland. The *Pedagogic Sketch Book* is helpfully examined again, and here certainly there is a clue to the kind of abstraction in which Klee believed so earnestly. More probable this, if not more convincing than Dr. Haftmann's own interpretations. For, however devotedly the disciple tries to "approach pictures of this type along the same paths as the artist" the chances are heavily against his doing so in Klee's case. The artist's world was too private, too deliberately subjective. A fascinating book nevertheless; and the author is so enthusiastic that we feel with Klee even when we do not understand him or his exponent. The book is interestingly illustrated.

HORACE SHIPP.

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ARTIST POTTERS IN ENGLAND.

By MURIEL ROSE. Faber. 35s.

This latest addition to the collection of Faber Monographs gives a brief history of studio pottery in this country traced through the influence of the French potters of the XIXth century, the English Martin Brothers, and, finally, Bernard Leach, whose original work in the 1920's is responsible for the remarkable hold that studio pottery now has in Great Britain. Muriel Rose also gives interesting biographical notes on the careers of many of the leading artist potters—mostly followers of Bernard Leach or W. Stairs Murray. A short chapter is devoted to those talented artists Lucie Rie and Hans Coper who, although originally from Austria and Germany respectively, have worked for a considerable time in this country and done much to raise the standard of design.

More than half the book consists of monochrome plates, of which there are nearly ninety, and there are four excellent colour plates which show that elusive quality of a high temperature glaze which no monochrome plate can give.

It will be disappointing to the many collectors and makers of pottery who follow eagerly the latest developments in the art to see that no reference is made to the work of Nicholas Vergette, William Newland and Margaret Hine. The work of these studio potters has created much well-merited interest and admiration during the past five years, and these artists are regarded by many as the new leaders of ceramic art in this country.

Paul Barron, another potter of the younger generation, deserves more notice than he receives by the one plate of a stoneware vase. Again, no mention is made of the work of those spirited artists Stephen Sykes and his wife.

The work of only a few people is included in the plates, some of them

having over a dozen illustrations of their work shown. This book would be much more interesting and representative if the work of these younger potters had been included. Without them the book is incomplete.

M. SCOTT JONES.

MR. GOULD'S TROPICAL BIRDS.

Selected and Introduced by EVA MANNERING. Ariel Press. £3 3s.

Slowly, and a little cautiously, the production of finely printed books has started up again; a little cautiously in a world of diminished wealth and diminished appetite for fine things, which prefers to spend cash, so one would imagine from the quiet but crowded parking streets also inhabited by booksellers, always upon fine motor-cars.

Eva Mannering, introducing this selection from the many plates in John Gould's many volumes, pictures a Gould folio as a necessary piece of Victorian display: "It was this zest for gathering one's world around one, within the narrow confines of one's own four walls, which found yet a further outlet in the acquisition of splendid folios and richly decorated albums, each representing in easily handled form a new opportunity of completing that self-contained microcosm which was the Victorian home." Perhaps—snobbery was also playing a hand in this game now that folios for kings and noblemen were becoming folios for the rich, newly elevated middle class.

Coloured lithographs, at any rate, were profitable; and Gould's appetite for birds and collecting was exceeded only by his prodigious energy in organising and briefing his draughtsmen and getting his folios out to an expectant world. The figures are given here as 2,999 plates in forty-one large folios, in a lifetime.

Out of this vast store, the editor has selected two dozen plates to reproduce in

colour; and they are not ill selected. Turn from plate to plate and you discover a pleasant sequence, a pleasant variation of pose, shape and colour, beginning with the plate of a magnificent *Andigena* from the Andes, and moving on to Trogons, Parakeets, and Humming-birds.

I find myself, though, remembering uneasily that Gould began by stuffing birds: he was taxidermist, early in his career, to the Zoological Society. I find myself seeing in the plates, however sumptuous, stuffed birds flattened out, like the kittens in a letter by Lewis Carroll which had been rolled flat on a wet road by a steam-roller and were put in between sheets of blotting-paper to dry and be made cosy. A little ungratefully I find myself, for beauty (and Victoriana), preferring the actual stuffed birds under the glass dome to Gould's massive but still more stuffed delineations. But that may be a personal taste.

I hurry to add that these plates (made in Germany) do fairly well by the originals; that the introduction is engaging, though slight, that the text is briefly taken from Gould himself. The plates are divided between those drawn on the stone by Mrs. Gould, by Richter and by Hart, all working so smoothly from Gould's sketches and to Gould's instructions.

This book does not guide us, or attempt to do so, around the large universe of Gould's publications; on the cover (but only on the cover) we are told which volumes the editor has gone to, there being no indication otherwise of the date or the source of individual plates. This is not very handy. It must also be admitted that the press work, casing, etc., are only moderate. In brief, we have here Gould diminished very much; we have a sample of Gould; enough to have served, in more opulent days, only for a prospectus. Still, the price is not at all steep.

GEOFFREY GRIGSON.

SALE ROOM NOTES AND PRICES

BY BRICOLEUR

COUNTRY SALES

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.—Messrs. Anderson and Garland held a sale in their New Market Street Auction Rooms at which the following prices were obtained. In the furniture section £46 was paid for a Sheraton inlaid Sofa Table in mahogany, supported on oblong standard supports and scroll legs with brass-capped feet, 4 ft. 3 in. long. A Three-decker Court Cupboard, more unusual than a two-tier example, brought £22. This was fitted with four cupboards enclosed by five panelled doors, and with an open compartment oversurmounted by a canopy top, 6 ft. 3 in. high. An antique walnut Spice Cabinet of thirteen drawers enclosed by two panelled doors, brought £20. A set of five single and one arm Elm Windsor Chairs sold for £12, and an oak Refectory Table on carved baluster supports £25. This table measured 6 ft. by 2 ft. 8 in. Carpets included a Durham Carpet in brown, red, black and blue, measuring 16 ft. 6 in. by 15 ft. 10 in., which brought £40 and another larger which brought £54. This second carpet measured 20 ft. 3 in. by 18 ft. 9 in. and was sold with an extra piece for a bay window.

CRICKHOWELL.—At a sale of the contents of Maescelyn, Crickhowell, Messrs. K. J. Straker, Chadwick and Sons sold a picture of Shipping on the Seine, attributed to E. Boudin, for £56, and another of a Woman gathering Wood, attributed to J. B. Corot, for £43. The furniture included an old Welsh Bacon Cupboard which sold for £30 and a Refectory Table which brought £56. There was also a Sheraton Dressing Table which made £38; a Georgian Pembroke Table and a Sheraton Card Table each made £30. An earlier piece which brought a high price was a Queen Anne walnut Table which sold for £205. The carpets included an Indian Carpet for which £153 was paid. Two examples of Welsh porcelain from the Nantgarw factory were a plate painted with roses by Billingsley and a Cup and Saucer; the plate brought £23 10s., and the cup and saucer £14. A canary yellow Jug, which is popular, sold for

£25 10s. A Worcester Tankard brought £18 15s. Included in the silver section was a George III Cake Basket sold for £20.

LEWES.—Messrs. Rowland Gorrington held a three-day sale at the Auction Galleries in Lewes in which they included a pair of Morris display Cabinets which is the type of furniture becoming popular now. This pair sold for £140. Lacquer furniture is also getting more popular now with buyers and at this sale a Chinese lacquer Cabinet made £29. A Chinese porcelain Fireplace Surround sold for £56. In the porcelain section £60 was paid for six Nantgarw Plates and £78 for five Swansea Plates.

Messrs. Henry Spencer and Son, of Retford, Notts., have held three important sales recently at Ragdale Hall, Coddington House and the Milford House Hotel.

RAGDALE HALL, MELTON MOWBRAY. At this sale there was included in the silver section a rare Queen Anne Tankard probably by Alice Sheene, London 1707. 20 oz. This tankard had a plain tapering body with flat cover and re-curving handle which sold for £72. An XVIIIth-century gold Pocket Watch of small size which is believed to have belonged to the Young Pretender, brought £50. The furniture included an important XVIIIth-century Continental Leather Screen which brought £280, although it measured 8 ft. 6 in. high. It was formed of six folds depicting a village festival with a market place and a church visible through an archway. Two pieces of Georgian furniture were: an architectural mahogany Bookcase of break-front form with broken arch pediment, the base with six drawers flanking a central cupboard, 9 ft. wide; this sold for £85. The other was a mahogany Wardrobe, also of architectural proportions with pierced cornice surmounted by five small urns, the lower part with three long drawers and the upper part with tray shelves. 5 ft. 6 in. wide, it sold for £52.

CODDINGTON HOUSE, NR. NEWARK. The silver in this house included an elegant William IV Inkstand which brought £28 and

## SALE ROOM NOTES AND PRICES

weighed 78 oz. It was of oblong octagonal form, chased with acorns and oak leaves and with spired covers. The maker was probably W. Bellchambers, London 1832. Also in this section was a George II Christening Mug, London 1770 (5 oz.), which was inscribed 'The Gift of a Friend to a Friend, Bachelor to Married, J. Price to J. Matthews, Jesus College, Oxford 1770'. This now sold for £12 5s. An unusual and attractive piece of furniture was an English elm circular gate-leg Table on slender turned supports. When open, it measured 4 ft. 5 in. diam. £31 was paid for this lot. £21 was paid for a James I style oak dower Chest with moulded panels on the cover, the front carved with lozenge medallions and formal foliage, 3 ft. 6 in. wide. Later furniture included a Sheraton design break-front Sideboard, 5 ft. wide, which sold for £55. It had mellowed to a golden colour and was inlaid with boxwood lines. Other Sheraton furniture included a charming pair of mahogany semi-elliptical Card Tables. These had a rich patination and were crossbanded in satinwood and tulipwood, the tops lined with green baize. £67 10s. was paid for these tables. A Sheraton design miniature Drum Table of nut-brown mahogany crossbanded in boxwood sold for £21. This was fitted with four drawers in the frieze and raised on a slender vase-shaped shaft with triple curving legs and spade feet. 20 in. diam. and 25 in. high. A Turkey Carpet brought £95. This particularly attractive example had a rich coral field with stylised medallions in predominating shades of lime-green, turquoise and blue. 19 ft. by 14 ft.

MILFORD HOUSE HOTEL, BAKEWELL. Carpets sold at this sale included a Persian Carpet designed with leafy ornament and diapers in puce and green on a mazarin blue ground. 6 ft. by 17 ft. It brought £38. Two Indian Carpets sold for £22 and £23. The first was designed with stylised medallions in red, green and turquoise on a buff field, 13 ft. 9 in. by 12 ft. 3 in., and the other with a central medallion and radiating flower sprays in pastel shades on a cream ground, 13 ft. by 10 ft. 6 in.

### FRENCH FURNITURE

Christies sold the fine French furniture belonging to Ernest Rehnitz, Esq. The many interesting pieces included Louis XVI *bonheur du jour*, in black lacquer by C. C. Saunier, 25 in. wide by 39 in. high, which brought 5,200 gns. This was designed with a raised cabinet at the back with panelled doors, the front and sides with Japanese lacquer panels decorated in gold and colours with river landscapes, finely cast ormolu frieze. Another lacquer piece was the fine Louis XV *bureau de dame*, by J. Dubois, which brought 1,000 gns., 35 in. wide, 33 in. high. This piece had slightly *bombe* sides and sloping front and was decorated with oriental landscapes in gilt on a black ground, the interior decorated with red lacquer. Two fine examples of marquetry were a Louis XV work table by L. Boudin, 17 in. wide, 28 in. high, which was of slightly serpentine shape and had a lifting top enclosing a fitted interior, the top with the inventory mark M.C.A. beneath a coronet, it sold for 1,250 gns. The other was an oval table, also by L. Boudin, which was inlaid with a tea equipage, vases and *jardinières* of flowering plants, it was fitted with a drawer and leather-covered slide. 1,850 gns. was paid for this piece which measured 22 in. wide by 29 in. high.

In another sale Christies sold a small Louis XV commode, by C. Topino. This was also in black lacquer and of serpentine shape fitted with two drawers and veneered with panels of Japanese lacquer with landscapes in gold and colours, with ormolu mounts. This attractive piece sold for 1,400 gns. Another fine French commode sent by the same owner was a transitional Louis XV/XVI piece similar to one illustrated by Salvete in *Les Ebenistes du XVIIIe Siècle*, pl. XVIII. This marquetry example by P. A. Foullet measured

58 in. wide and was decorated with marquetry panels of a girl and youth, flowers and vases on a kingwood ground, ormolu mounts. This commode brought 2,600 gns.

At Sotheby's the French furniture has included a Louis XV commode in kingwood, signed L. Peridiez, M.E. This maker, Louis Peridiez, was received Master in 1764. He married Michele Joubert, daughter of the court cabinet-maker, and was afterwards employed by the Garde-meuble to make furniture for the Chateau de Choisy. This example of his work, which is dated about 1770, measures 3 ft. 9 in. wide, is veneered with panels of finely figured kingwood, and of slightly *bombe* form, the ormolu mounts of rococo pattern with Chinese masks. £510 was paid for this piece. A jewel casket, also from the Louis XV period, brought £100. It was made by B. Lieutaud who is recorded by Salvete as making small pieces of furniture. He was received Master in 1749 and died in 1780. This casket was of *bombe* form, fitted with three drawers and veneered on four sides with cut brass inlaid with mother of pearl and tortoise-shell, 20 in. wide. In another property was an early Louis XV *bureau plat* which sold for £640. It was veneered with kingwood and had mounts at each end with emblems appropriate to the library, 4 ft. 11 in. wide.

At Phillips, Son & Neale, the two most interesting French pieces sold recently were an XVIIIth-century bureau-cabinet veneered in kingwood and inlaid with a design of birds and arabesques. The writing fall lined with leather which is impressed with the French Royal Cypher, this fall encloses a fitted recess with secret compartment and below another fall front enclosing miniature drawers and another secret compartment, ormolu mounted, 33 in. wide. This piece was sold for £1,000. The other lot, which sold for £440, was a fine pair of Encoignures signed J. F. Leleu and measuring 22 in. wide by 38 in. high. They were veneered in tulipwood and kingwood with fluted pilasters with gilt bronze mounts.

The Motcomb Galleries sold two pairs of French walnut arm-chairs for £36 and £42, both had carved and moulded frames, and another pair which was very similar brought £60.

### ARMOUR

At an armour sale at Sotheby's a highly important double-barrelled fowling-piece by Boutet, Versailles, brought £480. It was finely carved and engraved and with the Imperial N and eagle of France. This denotes the ownership of Napoleon I for whom it was made for presentation purposes by Nicholas-Noel Boutet (1761-1833), the director of the Imperial Arms factory of Versailles. Another very fine lot in this sale was an Italian (Brescian) wheel-lock gun from the first half of the XVIIth century, with elaborate pierced and engraved steel plaques, the partly fluted barrel inscribed Lazarino Cominazzo. It sold for £100. A pair of French flint-lock pistols, first half of the XVIIIth century, brought £70. This fine pair were inscribed Le Lorain à Valence, the barrels damascened with gold, 14½ in.

### TAPESTRY

At Sotheby's a Mortlake tapestry woven with the Hunt of Apollo and Diana within a border of massed fruit and flowers, brought £380. This measured 9 ft. 2 in. high by 15 ft. 10 in. wide, early XVIIIth century. Another early XVIIIth-century tapestry with exotic birds and fishes in the sea and on the banks of an island, 9 ft. 11 in. high by 15 ft. 7 in. high, brought £360.

An Aubusson wall panel sold for £60 at Phillips, Son and Neale. It measured 8 ft. 11 in. by 9 ft. 8 in. and was designed with dogs hunting a stag.

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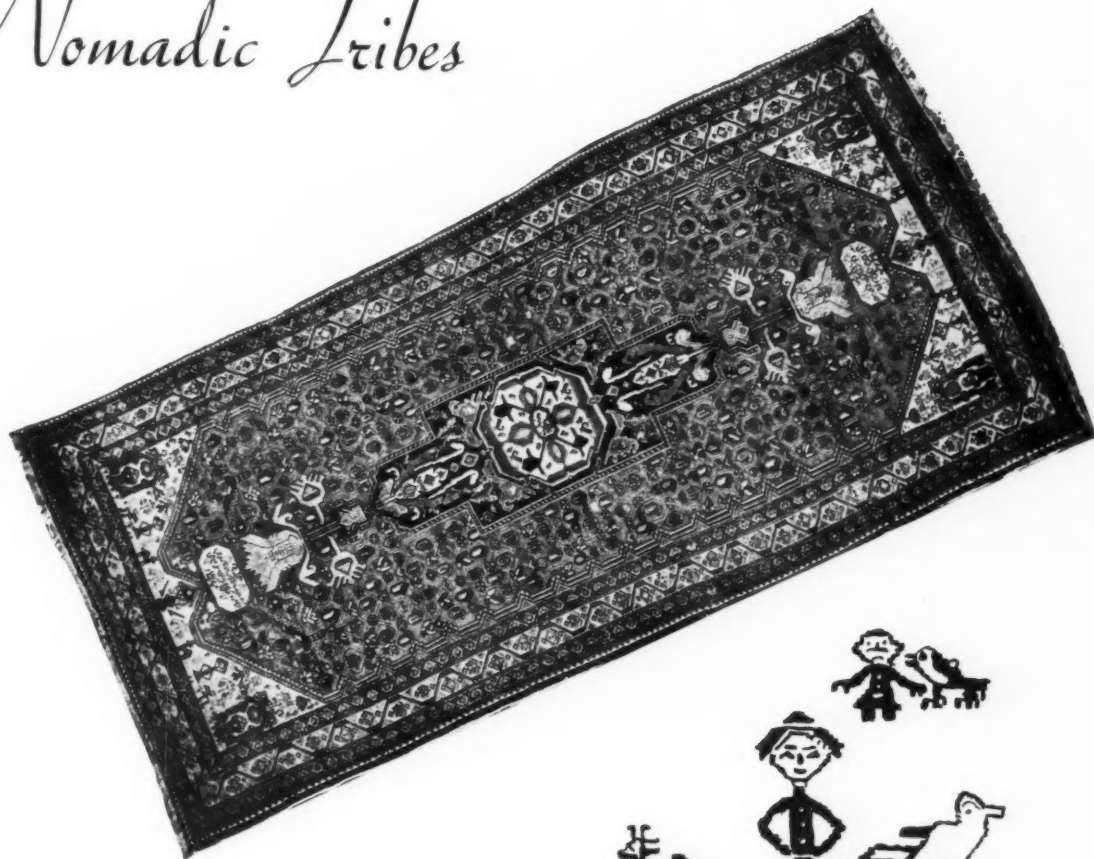
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